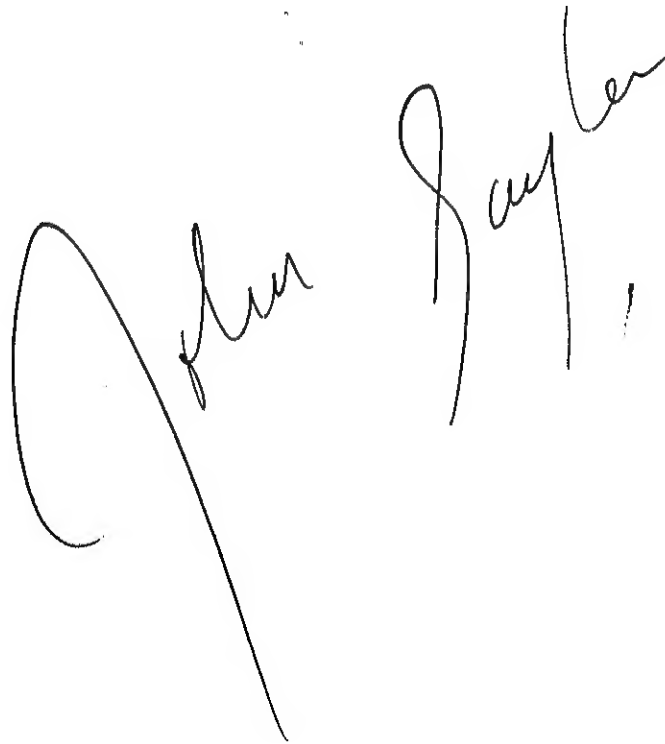


LONE STAR

Screenplay by
John Sayles

Revision 1/02/95
Revised Blue 3/17/95
Revised Pink 4/04/95

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John Sayles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

1 EXT. TEXAS SCRUB - DAY

Two men in shorts and Hawaiian shirts are poking around a sandy section in the middle of scrub flats. SERGEANT CLIFF POTTS is in the FG, a plant-and-tree guidebook in hand, as SERGEANT 'MIKEY' HOGAN works a metal detector over a large, sandy bank in the BG. Both are Army career men with a morning off to pursue their hobbies-

CLIFF

We got cenizo, that's purple sage-agave, nopal- what's this stuff-it's that whattayoucallit- horse-crippler-

Mikey bends to scoop something out of the sand, putting it in a canvas bag slung on his hip-

MIKEY

This place is a gold mine.

CLIFF

Lead mine.

Mikey sees that Cliff is talking, pulls his headset off-

MIKEY

What?

CLIFF

It's a lead mine.

MIKEY

Right.

CLIFF

I don't know why I'm talking to you, you've got that thing on your head.

MIKEY

You finding lots of cactus and shit?

CLIFF

It's not just cactus. There's the acacias, the yuccas-

MIKEY

(puts headset on)

Looks like a lot of cactus to me.

CLIFF (grumbles)

Man knows a hundred-fifty varieties of beer, he can't tell a poinsettia from a prickly pear.

MIKEY (troubled)

Cliff-

CLIFF

You live in a place, you should know something about it. Explore-

MIKEY

Cliff-

CU MIKEY

Mikey in the FG now, looking down at something as he pulls his headset off again-

MIKEY

Cliff, you gotta look at this-

Cliff wearily turns and approaches from the BG-

CLIFF

Don't tell me- Spanish treasure,
right? Pieces of eight from the
Coronado expedition-

He stops by Mikey and looks down, his expression changing-

CLIFF

Jesus-

GROUND - CU SKULL

Two-thirds exposed in the bank is a HUMAN SKULL. We PAN
slightly to see a RING lying near it. Mikey's hand appears
to pick it up-

MIKEY (O.S.)

Was Coronado in the Masons?

2 CREDITS

A plain background. OPENING CREDITS ROLL-

3 EXT. SCRUB - DAY - CAR

A road stretches away from us. DUST appears on the
horizon. The dust takes form around an APPROACHING CAR. The
car blasts up at us, then swerves sideways. When the DUST
CLEARS we see the county sheriff STAR insignia on the side of
the door. The door opens-

SKULL

A bit more exposed, as some dirt has been scraped away-

WIDER

Cliff stands looking at the arm as SAM DEEDS, the county sheriff, squats to join him. Sam is forty, quietly competent to the point of seeming a bit moody. Mikey is a few yards behind them, playing with his metal detector. Beyond him we see the sheriff's car parked-

SAM

I've got the forensics fella coming down from San Marcos. No way to know how old the body is without some lab work.

CLIFF

That ring-

SAM

Masons been around a long while.

Mikey seems to find something with the metal detector-

SAM

Treasure hunter?

CLIFF (apologetic)

Old bullets. He uhm- makes art with them.

Sam just nods. Mikey frowns, goes down on one knee and scratches something out of the dirt at his feet-

CLIFF

The Sheriff says we shouldn't touch anything, Mikey.

(to Sam)

He can't hear with that rig on-
Mikey!

Mikey comes up with something, holds it up to show them. An encrusted piece of metal-

MIKEY

What've we got here?

Sam crosses, takes the thing, lays it back down where Mikey found it-

SAM

Spoused to leave everything right where we found it. They're real particular about that.

MIKEY

The scene of the crime.

SAM

No telling yet if there's been a crime.

Sam frowns down at the piece of metal as he rubs the face of it-

CU METAL

Sam's thumb wipes across the face of the encrusted metal. It is roughly star-shaped-

SAM (O.S.)

But this country's seen a good number
of disagreements over the years.

4 INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY - TEXAS MAP

We look at a beautiful old pull-down map of Texas-

CELIE (O.S.)

He went to school on the post
when we were in Korea.

*
*

A teacher in her late 30's, PILAR CRUZ, steps in front of the map and we FOLLOW her across the room, carrying a poster-

CELIE (O.S.)

It's all- you know- kids in the same
boat-

Posters hung on the walls beyond her show luminaries from Texas history- Sam Houston, Stephen Austin, Juan Seguin. A new parent, CELIE PAYNE, stands in the middle of the otherwise empty classroom-

CELIE

Army brats-

PILAR

His record shows that he's a good
student.

CELIE

I'm more worried about the social
thing. Are there like- gangs, or- ?

Pilar starts to put the poster up. Celie moves to hold it in place for her-

PILAR

We haven't had any serious violence,
if that's what you mean. We've got
a pretty lively mix though- Anglo
kids, Mexican kids, Black kids-
thanks-

CELIE

And Blacks are-

PILAR

They're the smallest group except for a couple Kickapoo kids. Look, you're obviously a concerned parent, Chet has no history of getting into trouble-

She steps back to see if the poster, an old photo of Geronimo, is straight. Another teacher, MOLLY, sticks her head in the door-

MOLLY (uncomfortable)

Pilar? Is uhm- is Amado okay?

PILAR

Okay? He's not here?

MOLLY

No. Is he sick?

PILAR (mutters)

He's going to wish he was dead.

5 EXT. STREET - DAY - CU VAQUERO PICTURE

On the door of a deluxe pickup truck is an air-brushed picture of a Pancho Villa-looking vaquero with bandoliers crossing his chest and a gun blazing in each hand. We hear LOUD MUSIC-

WIDER

A small group of teenage Tejano BOYS hang around the truck- in the bed, on the hood, leaning against it. A BOOMBOX placed on top of the cab blasts MUSIC out at the neighborhood. Somebody's legs are hanging out the open passenger side door. The kids suddenly look as a Sheriff's department car slides into the FG. A deputy, TRAVIS, gets out-

KIDS

Trying to look tough and unworried as we TRACK across the street toward them. The deputy sheriff's hand reaches out from behind the camera to flick the MUSIC OFF-

PICKUP

AMADO CRUZ, Pilar's 15-year-old son, lies on the front seat installing a compact disc player into the dash slot. He reaches up to the dash, can't find what he wants-

AMADO

Somebody hand me the CD player--
dámelo, pendejos--

He looks up and we TILT to see TRAVIS, a deputy sheriff, leaning in the window, examining the new radio-

TRAVIS

They come a long way from those old
8-track jobs, haven't they?

AMADO

Something wrong?

TRAVIS (waves radio)

This is stolen property. Alla of you
fellas are coming down to the station.

6 INT. CAFE SANTA BARBARA - AFTERNOON - ENRIQUE

Sweat beads the forehead of a thin, tired-looking recent immigrant, ENRIQUE, as he delivers platters of chile relleños to a booth. MEXICAN MUSIC plays on a jukebox in the BG. We HOLD on the booth, where HOLLIS POGUE, in his 60's, entertains two GOOD OLD BOYS-

HOLLIS

So Buddy walks up to the porch and there's old Fishbait McHenry, cleanin the dirt out his toenails with a pocketknife- he was the most hygenic of all the McHenrys-

The breakfast companions are laughing already-

HOLLIS

"Fishbait," says Buddy, in that quiet way of his, "what you know about them tires that went missing from Merkel's?" Fishbait thinks for a minute, then he lifts up a loose board from the porch floor and calls down into it "C'mon out, Pooter, they caught us!"

FENTON (laughing)

Buddy Deeds. He had a way.

HOLLIS

He known who it was onnaconna the tire tracks in the dirt from the back of the garage to where they loaded up. "Old Fishbait," he says, "never lifted a thing in this world if there was a way he could roll it."

More laughter-

FENTON

Won't be another like him. That boy of his doesn't come near it. You ask me, he's all hat and no cattle-

SAM (O.S.)

Fellas-

We WIDEN to see Sam standing by their table. No telling how long he's been listening. Fenton is embarrassed-

HOLLIS

Sam! I was just telling a few about your old man.

FENTON

He was a unique individual.

SAM

Yeah, he was that.

We sense a little strain when Sam has to talk about his father-

HOLLIS

Big day coming up- I wish we'd have thought of it while he was still living. But he went so unexpected-

FENTON

Better late than never. Korean War hero, Sheriff for near thirty years- Buddy Deeds Memorial Courth-

SAM

I heard there was a bit of a fuss.

HOLLIS

Oh, you know, the usual troublemakers. Danny Padilla from the Sentinel, that crowd-

FENTON

Every other damn thing in the country is called after Martin Luther King, they can't let our side have one measly courthouse?

HOLLIS

King wasn't Mexican, Fenton-

FENTON

Bad enough all the street names are in Spanish-

SAM

They were here first-

FENTON

Then name it after Big Chief Shitinabucket! Whoever that Tonkawa fella was. He had the Mexes beat by centuries-

SAM

Nineteen out of twenty people in this town're Mexican, Fenton-

FENTON

Been that way since the gitgo. So what?

HOLLIS

There was a faction pulling for that boy who was killed in the Gulf War- Rueben-

SAM

-Santiago.

HOLLIS

Right. But nobody here ever noticed him till they read his name on the national news- the Mexicans that know, that remember, understand what Buddy was for their people. Hell, it was Mercedes over there who swung the deciding vote for him.

Sam looks to the register where Pilar's mother, MERCEDES CRUZ, whacks rolls of change apart on the counter. She seems to be avoiding looking toward him-

SAM

That so?

HOLLIS

She put it even at three to three, so as the mayor I get to cast the tie-breaker. The older generation won't have any problem with it. They remember how Buddy come to be Sheriff.

FENTON

Tell that one, Hollis-

HOLLIS

Hell, everybody heard that story a million times-

SAM

I'd like to hear it. Your version of it.

Something about the way Sam says it puts Hollis on guard-

FENTON

Go ahead, Hollis.

A6 INT. CAFE - CU HOLLIS (TRANSITION)

Hollis is hooked into it now-

8A.

HOLLIS

The two of us were the only deputies
back then- me and Buddy- it's what-
'58-

FENTON (O.S.)

'57, I believe-

HOLLIS

And the Sheriff at the time was Big Charley Wade. Charley was one of your old- fashioned bribe-or-bullets kind of sheriffs, he took a healthy bite out of whatever moved through this county-

He looks down at the table-

HOLLIS

It was in here one night, back when Jimmy Herrera run the place. Started over a basket of tortillas-

We PAN down to the table. The food has changed. The tortillas are in a straw basket instead of plastic. A hand with a big Masonic ring on one finger appears to lift a tortilla- underneath it lie three ten dollar bills. The hand lifts them up and we TILT to see the face of SHERIFF CHARLEY WADE, a big, mean redneck with shrewd eyes-

It is 1957-

WADE (grins)

This beaner fare doesn't agree with me, but the price sure is right.

WIDER

Wade sits next to one of his young deputies, YOUNG HOLLIS (30's) Hollis has the anxious look of an errand boy-

BUDDY (O.S.)

What's that for?

WADE

Jimmy got a kitchen full of wetbacks, most of em relatives. People breed like chickens.

Wade folds the money and stuffs it in his pocket-

BUDDY (O.S.)

So?

WADE

I roust some muchacho on the street, doesn't have his papers, all he got to say is "Yo trabajo para Jimmy Herrera."

We PAN across the table to another young deputy, BUDDY DEEDS (20's). Buddy is self-contained and quietly forceful for his age. A chicken-fried steak sits untouched in front of him-

WADE (O.S.)

Kind of an 'I scratch his back, he washes mine' arrangement, if you know what I mean.

WADE

WADE

This is gonna be one of your pickups, Buddy. First of the month, just like the rent. Get the car, Hollis.

Wade and Hollis slide out of the booth to stand-

BUDDY
I'm not doing it.

Hollis stops a few feet away, shocked. Wade just stares down at Buddy-

WADE
Come again?

Buddy looks Wade in the eye, seemingly unafraid-

BUDDY
It's your deal.

WADE
There's gonna be some left over for you. I take care of my boys-

BUDDY
That's not the point.

WADE
You feeling bad for Jimmy? Have him tell you the size of the mordida they took out of his hide when he run a place on the other side. Those old boys in Ciudad León-

BUDDY
I'm not picking it up.

WADE (smiles)
You do whatever I say you do or else you put it on the trail, son.

The CUSTOMERS are all watching now, nervous. Buddy thinks for a moment, not taking his eyes off Wade-

BUDDY
How bout this- how bout you put that shield on this table and vanish before you end up dead or in jail?

It is dead silent but for the MUSIC on the box-

WADE
You not making sense, Buddy.

BUDDY
You stick around and I'm bringing charges up on that county road project- two thirds of that money went straight into your pocket.

WADE
You being awful careless with your mouth, son.

Wade rests his hand on his pistol. Buddy looks at it-

BUDDY

You ever shoot anybody was looking
you in the eye?

Buddy has his gun out under the table. He slowly brings it
up and lays it flat on the table, not taking his hand off it
or his eye off Wade-

BUDDY

Whole different story, isn't it?

WADE

You're fired.

BUDDY

There's not a soul in this county
isn't sick to death of your bullshit,
Charley. You made yourself scarce,
you could make a lot of people happy.

WADE

You little pissant-

Bystanders begin to drift out of the line of fire as Wade's
fingers tighten around his gun. Buddy's finger curls around
the trigger of his. The hammer is cocked-

BUDDY

Now or later, Charley. You won't
have any trouble finding me.

Wade feels the people around him waiting for a reaction. He
leans close to Buddy to croak in a hoarse whisper--

WADE

You're a dead man.

He turns and nearly bumps into Hollis. He gives the Deputy
a shove-

WADE

Get the goddam car. We're going to
Roderick's.

7 INT. CAFE - DAY - CU BUDDY

He watches till the screen door shuts behind them, then
holsters his gun and begins to saw at the steak as if nothing
had happened. He calls softly-

BUDDY

Muchacho- más cerveza por favor.

He looks up at somebody and we PAN till we see Sam, standing
in the middle of the room, listening.

We are back in 1995-

HOLLIS (O.S.)
'Más cerveza por favor.'

FENTON (O.S.)
That Buddy was a cool breeze.

We PULL BACK to see Hollis and his buddies at the table, eating their lunches as they listen-

FENTON

Charley Wade were known to have put a good number of people in the ground, and your daddy gets eyeball to eyeball with him.

HOLLIS

We made our collection at Roderick's place and that was the last anybody seen hide nor hair of him. He went missing the next day, along with ten thousand dollars in county funds from the safe at the jail. Never heard from him again.

FENTON

Buddy Deeds said a thing, he damn well backed it up. Won't be another like him.

SAM

So I suppose then he arrested all of Jimmy Herrera's people and sent em back to the other side-

Hollis sees what Sam is getting at, grins-

HOLLIS

Oh- he come to an accomodation. Money doesn't always need to change hands to keep the wheels turning. Look, I know you had some problems with your father, and he and Muriel- well-

FENTON

Your mother was a saint.

HOLLIS

-but Buddy Deeds was my salvation.

Sam nods, speaks softly-

SAM

Won't be another like him.

8 EXT. ARMY POST - DAY - CU DEL PAYNE

COLONEL DELMORE PAYNE (DEL), a very direct, by-the-book Black full Colonel, addresses assembled OFFICERS and NCOs-

DEL

-it's an honor for me to assume command of this unit, and I look forward to working with all of you.

DEL

-it's an honor for me to assume
command of this unit, and I look
forward to working with all of you.

OFFICERS

Cliff and Mikey, in uniform now, flank SERGEANT PRISCILLA WORTH, a Black woman in her early 40's, as they stand in loose formation-

DEL (O.S.)
I'm sure you're all aware of the
Army's decision to shut this post
down. That does not mean, however-

REVERSE

We look over the shoulders of assembled OFFICERS and NCOs toward Del-

DEL
-that we are here to mark time until
we are reassigned.

CU DEL

DEL
You may have heard rumors that I run
a very tight operation. These rumors
are not exaggerated.

9 INT. JAIL - SAM'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON - BUDDY PHOTO

We are looking through a magnifying glass at an old photo. Buddy's face is slightly distorted by the glass. We hear the VOICE of his secretary on the INTERCOM-

LUPE (intercom)
Sam? I got Danny Padilla from the
paper for you-

SAM

Sam sits at his desk in the sheriff's office, looking down at the photo-

SAM
Tell him I'll catch him later.

CU PHOTOGRAPH

An old photo of the 1957 Sheriff's Department officers on the courthouse steps. Wade, Hollis, Buddy, a few others, all in uniform-

LUPE (intercom)
He says he needs to talk to you
before the ceremony.

SAM

Sam puts a magnifying glass over the photo and bends close to look-

SAM

Tell him to try me tomorrow.

ECU PHOTO - BADGE

A MAGNIFIED POV of the badge on Wade's chest swims into view.
A metal star-

LUPE (intercom)

He thinks you're trying to duck him.

CU SAM

Looking at the photo, troubled-

SAM (mutters)

He's right.

10 EXT. MR. O'S ROADHOUSE - NIGHT - NEON SIGN

We start on a BLINKING SIGN- MR. O'S, then PAN to see a full parking lot outside the low, neon-lit roadhouse. R&B MUSIC blasts from inside-

DOORWAY - CHET

CHET, a Black kid around 15, stands nervously at the door, building up his courage. He takes a deep breath, plunges in-

11 INT. MR. O'S

We TRACK with Chet, very nervous, as he makes his way through the crowded roadhouse. The customers are all Black, many from the nearby Army post, SHOUTING and LAUGHING over the loud MUSIC. Chet is looking for somebody, edgy. He sees-

CHET'S POV - OTIS

Seen through the crush is OTIS PAYNE, a man in his early 60's, laughing as he stands behind the bar-

CHET

He nervously puts his hand under his jacket. A gun? He pushes forward to get a better view-

CHET'S POV - OTIS

Moving in on him. Otis looks over, sees the boy, frowns-

CHET

Reaching under his jacket, he pulls out- a jar label. He looks at it- it shows Otis with a chef's hat on, holding a chunk of sauce-dripping brisket up with a fork. Suddenly there is a SCREAM from behind, then GUNSHOTS, patrons diving for the floor. Chet whirls around and we WHIP PAN to see a young man, RICHIE, lying on the floor holding his chest, bleeding, as a young woman, ATHENA, kneels by him, crying hysterically. Another young man, SHADOW, is being held face down on the floor with his arm jerked behind his back by several angry PATRONS, one of whom kicks a HANDGUN away from him. Lots of SHOUTING-

CHET

Chet backs up, horrified. A hand grasps him on the shoulder from behind. He turns to see Otis standing over him, strangely calm amid the chaos-

OTIS

You weren't in here tonight, were you?

CHET

No sir.

OTIS (points)

Go out through the back.

Chet hurries away. Otis watches him for a moment, then turns to the mess in his club-

12 INT. CLASSROOM - NIGHT - CU ANGLO MOTHER

An angry woman stands from her chair-

ANGLO MOTHER

You're just tearin everything down!
Tearin down our heritage, tearin down
the memory of people that fought and
died for this land-

MEXICAN-AMERICAN FATHER (O.S.)

We fought and died for this land too!

We WHIP PAN to see another standing parent-

MEXICAN-AMERICAN FATHER

We fought the U.S. Army, the Texas
Rangers-

ANGLO FATHER (O.S.)

Yeah, but you lost, buddy!

We WHIP PAN to a man in the rear-

ANGLO FATHER

Winners get the bragging rights,
that's how it goes-

PRINCIPAL (O.S.)
People- people-

WIDER

We are in Pilar's classroom, a hot-and-heavy teachers and parents meeting in progress. Pilar sits with other TEACHERS and the PRINCIPAL surrounded by agitated PARENTS, taking some heat. DANNY PADILLA, a young reporter, sits in the front taking notes, enjoying the show-

PRINCIPAL
I think it would be best not to put things in terms of winners and losers-

ANGLO MOTHER (points at Pilar)
Well the way she's teachin it has got everything switched around. I was on the textbook committee, and her version is not-

PRINCIPAL
We think of the textbook as kind of a guide, not an absolute-

ANGLO MOTHER
-it is not what we set as the standard! Now you people can believe what you want, but when it comes to teaching our children-

MEXICAN-AMERICAN MOTHER
They're our children too! As a majority in this community, we have a right-

ANGLO FATHER
And the men who founded this state have a right to have their story-

DANNY
The men who founded this state broke from Mexico because they needed slavery to be legal to make a fortune in the cotton business!

PILAR
I think that's a bit of an oversimplification-

ANGLO FATHER
Are you reporting this meeting or runnin it, Danny?

DANNY
Just adding a little historical perspective-

DOORWAY

PALOMA AGUILAR, Pilar's teenage daughter, peeks into the room, then moves in through the parents-

ANGLO FATHER

You may call it history, but I call it propaganda. I'm sure they got their own account of the Alamo on the other side, but we're not on the other side, so we're not about to have it taught in our schools!

PILAR

There's no reason to be so threatened by this-

PILAR

Pilar is trying to stay calm despite her anger-

PILAR

I've only been trying to get across some of the complexity of our situation down here- cultures coming together in both negative and positive ways-

ANGLO MOTHER (O.S.)

If you mean like music and food and all, I have no problem with that-

REVERSE

We shoot past Pilar toward the parents in their seats. Paloma steps up to whisper to her-

ANGLO MOTHER

-but when you start changing who did what to who-

MOLLY

We're not changing anything, we're presented a more complete picture-

ANGLO MOTHER

And that's what's got to stop!

Pilar looks troubled by what she's heard. She shoots a look toward the others at the table, then slips away with Paloma-

MOLLY

There's enough ignorance in the world without us encouraging it in the classroom-

::

ANGLO MOTHER
Now who are you calling ignorant?

The parents all begin to argue at once, tempers rising-

PRINCIPAL
Folks, folks--- I know this is a
very emotional issue for some of you,
but we do have other business to
attend to-

13 INT. JAIL - NIGHT - PRISONER DOCK/HALLWAY - SHADOW

Shadow, face bruised, hands cuffed behind him, is pushed in
through the prisoner dock by a DEPUTY-

SHADOW
I hope the sucker does die, man!
Mess with me, that's what you get!

The deputy steers Shadow into a Violent holding cell as Sam's
Chief Deputy, RAY HERNANDEZ, steps in behind them-

RAY
Hospital says the other kid is in bad
shape-

SAM (O.S.)
The shooter local?

Ray brings us to Sam, and they continue down the hallway
together-

RAY (shakes his head)
Down from Houston. I think he knew
the girl before.

SAM
We'll take a statement from all the
GIs before they go back to post. You
can get the story from Otis over at
the club.

RAY
Right. Any poop on the John Doe you
found out there today?

SAM
Nothin much. The Rangers put Ben
Wetzel on it. Catch you later.

As Ray steps away, Sam sees through the reception booth to
Pilar, looking distraught, on the other side of the glass-

PILAR
-one of the other boys told his
sister and she called us. He's only
fifteen-

CU SAM

Wonders what she's doing there. He steps through the door
to reception-

LOBBY - PILAR

She stands by the window, looking tired and a bit scared under the harsh overhead light-

PILAR
He's about five foot five-

SAM (O.S.)
Pilar?

Pilar looks around. Sam is standing by her. We can tell there is some history between these two-

SAM
: : : Something wrong?

PILAR
They've got my Amado.

SAM
Got him here?

PILAR
Somebody called- something about a house that was broken into. He may have given a different name-

SAM
I know what he looks like. I'll see what's going on.

He starts away, stops, comes back-

SAM
I was- I was real sorry about Nando. He was a good fella. We haven't talked since-

PILAR
We haven't talked since high school.

SAM
Yeah. I'll go check on your boy.

Pilar watches Sam go-

14 INT. JAIL - INTERROGATION ROOM

A DETECTIVE sits typing away at a word processor as Athena, in tears, gives testimony. Travis hangs by the door, watching-

ATHENA
-so Richie just didn't say nothin
: cause he didn't want to get into it,
see, and the next thing I know
there's shots and Richie is down. It
happened so fast-

Sam pokes his head in-

SAM
Travis?

REVERSE, CLOSER

Sam and Travis speak softly as Athena continues in the background-

SAM

We got some boys you run in earlier today?

TRAVIS

I pulled the bunch that hangs at Pico Bernal's place. We finally caught them with something.

SAM

Was there a younger one with--

TRAVIS

The kid putting in the radio said he was 18, but I didn't buy it. I got him in isolation on the juvenile wing.

SAM (starts away)

Thanks-

TRAVIS

Said his name was Pancho Villa.

15 INT. JAIL HALLWAY

Sam walks with Amado, who is trying to look defiant-

SAM

They tell me you're good at fixing things.

Nothing-

SAM

Your father was a hell of a mechanic.

Still nothing-

SAM

You know, if you figure minimum wage on the time most thieves spend in jail, they could have bought most everything they stole.

AMADO

They asked me to hook it up for them. I didn't steal anything.

SAM

I didn't say you did. My name is Sam, by the way.

Amado just gives him a look-

16 INT. JAIL - RECEPTION

Sam and Amado step out into reception, where Pilar stands waiting-

SAM
He's all yours.

PILAR
Are you okay?

AMADO
I don't know what the big deal is.

PILAR
You'll find out when I get you home.
Thanks, Sam.

SAM
No problem.

Pilar yanks Amado outside by his arm. She turns to shoot a look back at him, then steps out through the glass door-

CÜ SAM

Watching her go-

SAM
Nice to see you again.

FADE OUT:

17 EXT. ARMY POST - OBSTACLE COURSE - MORNING - PIT

We shoot up from a pit in the ground. WHUMP! WHUMP! WHUMP!
Three men leap over, landing on the far side and running away from us-

MEN

Del Payne runs with Cliff and Mikey on a pathway along a security fence, the two Sergeants struggling to keep up, occasionally vaulting or scaling some mild obstacle-

MIKEY
Mr. O's is the only place in the county that our African American soldiers are uhm- that they feel comfortable in.

DEL
Have we had trouble there before?

CLIFF
A fistfight now and then-

MIKEY
The town isn't much, Colonel-

DEL
They didn't come for a vacation.

MIKEY

No sir. But for a lot of them it's their first time away from home, dealing with new people- I remember my first hitch-

DEL

Substance abuse?

MIKEY

Well, yeah, but I went through the Program. I haven't had a drink since-

DEL

I meant on the post. In general.
How are you dealing with it?

CLIFF

We throw a urine test at them once a month. Random numbers, maybe a hundred people at a time-

DEL

Why don't we make it once a week for a while?

CLIFF

No problem, sir.

Del notices how hard they are breathing-

DEL

I sprint the last quarter mile. You gentlemen don't have to keep up if you don't care to.

MIKEY

Appreciate it, sir.

Del accelerates and we HOLD with the Sergeants, slowing to a near-walk-

MIKEY

Guy cracks walnuts with his asshole.

CLIFF (grins)

You get the feeling he doesn't want to be here?

18 INT. FORENSICS LAB - VARIOUS SHOTS

We hear Hank Williams' gospel song 'I'll Have a New Body (I'll Have a New Life)' as we see-

A THIGH BONE being measured lengthwise-

A SHOULDER BLADE measured with a caliper-

The SKELETON, many bones missing, being laid out on a table-

The encrusted BADGE being dropped into a glass jar of
detarnishing fluid-

Flipping through PHOTOS of the staked-out area where the body
was found, exposed bones circled in red ink-

A few front teeth held up to the skull, on which only the
molars remain-

The Masonic ring, polished now, being placed under a
magnifying glass-

The badge, clean and shining now, pulled from the fluid-

CU BADGE

MUSIC CONTINUES as we TIGHTEN on the piece of metal, a pair of tongs pulling it from the detarnishing solution. A star-shaped badge, bearing the words "SHERIFF" "RIO COUNTY"-

19 INT. COUNTRY WESTERN BAR - AFTERNOON

C&W MUSIC playing, a few regulars shooting pool. Sam makes his way to a table where BEN WETZEL, a Texas Ranger, sits with a file of forensic reports-

BEN
Sam the Man-

SAM
Hey, Ben. Thanks for coming down.

They shake, Sam sits-

BEN
How's business?

SAM
Business is booming. Got your drugs, got your illegals- had a shooting the other night at O's place. Soldier got ventilated.

BEN
I hear they're closing Fort McKenzie down.

SAM
September '97, that's all she wrote.

BEN
Gonna pull a lot of jobs out of this county.

SAM
Yeah, we'll have folks swimming over to Mexico to work in the sweat shops.

Sam looks at the folder of reports-

SAM
That the word on our boy?

BEN
Yeah, this is Skinny.

SAM
Skinny?

BEN
We find a body it's either Skinny or Stinky, depending on how much meat there is on the bones.

SAM
Nice job.

BEN (opens folder)
Male caucasian, forty to sixty years
old, five nine to five eleven, chewed
tobacco- then we get into the dental
records and personal effects-

SAM
Charley Wade.

BEN (nods)
That badge-

SAM
It didn't come out of a cereal box.

BEN
Yeah.

SAM
You know the popular version of how
he left town-

BEN
Everybody on the border knows that
story.

SAM
You got a cause of death?

BEN
Skull was intact, no signs of trauma
on what we found of him- not much to
go on.

SAM
So he could have gone out to the
post, hopped the fence, dug down into
the dirt on the old rifle range and
had a heart attack.

Ben smiles, closes the folder-

BEN
You uhm- you remember what old Buddy
carried for a sidearm?

SAM
Colt Peacemaker.

BEN
A .45-

SAM
He swore by it.
(Ben frowns)
What?

BEN
Just wondering-

SAM
So is Buddy on your short list?

BEN
If it was some poor mojado, swam
across at night, got lost in the
brush and starved out there it
wouldn't go much further. But this
is a formerly prominent citizen,
disappeared under a cloud-

SAM
You got to investigate. No question
about it.

BEN
What I will do is keep names out of
it till we got some answers or hit a
dead end. You know how the press is
with a murder story- even if it's
forty years old.

SAM
Yeah, they can do a number on
you.

They sit in an awkward silence for a moment. Ben feels bad
about this-

BEN
I remember Charley Wade come to my
father's hardware store once when I
was a little boy. I'd heard stories
how he shot this one, how he shot
that one- man winked at me and I peed
in my pants.
(shakes his head)
Winked at me.

20 INT. PILAR'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Pilar stands at the blackboard by her outline of 19th century
Texas history-

PILAR
Okay, we have the fight against the
Spanish with bloody conflict for
dozens of years till they're finally
defeated in 1821 and Mexican
independence declared. Anglo
settlers are invited-

CU DRAWING

Somebody making a skillful pencil drawing on the corner of a
sheet of lined notebook paper. A bald, muscular shot-putter

25A*.

..
after releasing the shot, his hand large in the FG-

PILAR (O.S.)

-to colonize the area and by the time they begin the movement against Santa Anna they outnumber the Mexicans here by four to one. The war between Mexico-

CHET

Drawing intently. He takes the notebook and lays his thumb over the corner-

PILAR (O.S.)

-and the Anglo forces ends in 1836 with the formation of the Texas Republic. Texas joins the United States as a state where slavery is legal in 1845-

NOTEBOOK

Chet 'flips' the corner of the notebook and the series of drawings he's made form a brief cartoon of the shot putter blowing his cheeks out and heaving the shot right past us. Extremely well-drawn-

PILAR (O.S.)

-after the so-called Mexican War and then secedes to join the Confederacy in 1861. The Confederacy is beaten, and the Reformation period here is marked by range wars and race wars-

PILAR

Looking out at the class-

PILAR

-and all this paralleled by constant battles between both the Mexican and Anglo settlers and the various Indian nations in the area. What are we seeing here? Chet?

CHET

Startled, he hides the notebook under his hands-

CHET

Uhm- everybody is killing everybody else?

21 EXT. LAKESIDE - DAY - CU FISHING LURE

A nasty-looking thing. Only a bass would want to eat this. Hollis leans in to peer at the thing dangling before his face-

WIDER

Hollis sits in the swivel chair of a bass boat tied to a dock at the lake, going through his box of lures. Sam appears on the dock and steps down-

SAM

I always wondered what you Mayors do when you're not cutting ribbons-

HOLLIS

Sam! Hey podner! You caught me playing hooky-

SAM

(looks across lake)

Floating around out here, playin hell with them bass- play a little cards, play a little golf, drink some beer-

HOLLIS

Sounds great. Where do I sign up?

SAM

I haven't been out here for a while.

HOLLIS

You go by your old house?

SAM

No.

HOLLIS

Just as well. The new people painted it some god-awful color-

SAM

We found a body out by Fort McKenzie yesterday. Been there for a long time.

Hollis squints at a rubbery lure, rejects it-

HOLLIS

Was it Davy Crockett or Jim Bowie?

SAM (smiles)

You recall if Charley Wade was a Mason?

HOLLIS

Charley? I believe he was. Used to go for lodge meetings over to Laredo. What's he got to do with your body?

SAM

All it was wearing was a big old Masonic ring and a Rio County sheriff's badge.

Hollis reacts. Sam puts a foot on the gunwale of the boat-

SAM

You don't remember anything else from that last night you saw him, do you?

HOLLIS

I told the story enough times- hell, we were just in the car, he was stewing about the fight with Buddy while we drove over to Roderick Bledsoe's-

SAM

Bledsoe?

HOLLIS

He owned the colored roadhouse before Otis Payne-

SAM

He still living?

HOLLIS

No. I think his widow's still in their place in Darktown, though.

(shakes his head)

You think it's Charley Wade huh?

SAM

Forensics people are sure of it. You have any idea who might have put him there?

Hollis makes a great show of considering-

SAM

Besides my father, I mean.

HOLLIS

There's no call for that, Sam. Wade made himself a pile of enemies over the years.

SAM

And Buddy was one of them.

HOLLIS

We got that dedication tomorrow. This is a hell of a time to be draggin up old business-

SAM

People have worked this whole big thing up around my father. If it's built on a crime, they deserve to know. Now I understand why you might want to believe he couldn't do it-

HOLLIS

And I understand why you might want to think he could.

This is a low blow, but accurate enough to shake Sam up-

SAM

Thanks for your time, Hollis.

Hollis holds up a double handful of lures- dozens of rubber and plastic worms and shiners and frogs and spinners-

HOLLIS

Look at all this, would you? My tackle, the boat- all to catch a little old fish just minding its business on the bottom of the lake.

He gives Sam a look-

HOLLIS

Hardly seems worth the effort- does it, Sam?

Sam walks away-

22 INT. ARMY POST CLASSROOM - DAY - CU ATHENA

Athena stands at attention, trying to keep her composure-

CLIFF (O.S.)

So you knew this young man before?

ATHENA

From back in Houston. We both come up on Fifth Street.

PRISCILLA (O.S.)

Did you know he was going to be there last night?

ATHENA

If I had I wouldn't have gone in.

PRISCILLA (O.S.)

And you and Private Graves-

ATHENA

We were just dancing-

WIDER

Cliff leans against a desk, a blackboard covered with radar diagrams behind him. Priscilla sits nearby, both of them focussed on Athena-

PRISCILLA

We're not running a dating service here.

ATHENA

I know that, First Sergeant. We were just dancing. There was a bunch of us there. Shadow just come down looking for trouble.

CLIFF

I don't like job to get involved in the personal life of soldiers, but when it interferes with the training here-

ATHENA

I'm sorry, Sergeant Major. There wasn't anything I could do. Shadow gets crazy-

A silence as the Sergeants let her stew for a moment. She works up her courage-

ATHENA

Sergeant Major? How is Richie doing? Private Graves?

CLIFF

He'll live. He'll be transferred to Fort Sam as soon as he's stabilized-

PRISCILLA

He'll probably be getting a medical discharge-

ATHENA

Out of the Army?

CLIFF

He's going to lose a lung.

This is not good news for Athena-

ATHENA

Will this go on my record?

Cliff considers for a long moment-

CLIFF

The incident will be noted, but if it happened the way you say it did, there hasn't been an infraction.

ATHENA

Thank you, Sergeant Major.

CLIFF

You're dismissed.

ATHENA

Thank you, Sergeant Major.

Athena steps out of the room. Cliff sits on the desk-

PRISCILLA
You spoil em, Cliff.

CLIFF
You don't believe her?

PRISCILLA
Let's just say it wasn't much of an
interogation. I'm the one in charge
of her sorry ass, and I-

CLIFF
I'm gonna give her the third degree
because her ex-boyfriend is a thug?
She's pulled herself out of a pretty
rough neighborhood-

PRISCILLA
And if she isn't careful she's gonna
slide right back into it.

23 EXT. MINNIE'S HOUSE - DAY - ROCKER

We start on a CU of a rocker creaking back and forth on an
old wooden porch. A WOMAN HUMS-

MINNIE

MINNIE BLEDSOE, in her sixties, sits on her porch in the old
Black section of town, playing with a Gameboy. She has very
thick glasses on. Sam walks up to her from his car-

SAM
Mrs. Bledsoe?

MINNIE
That's me.

SAM
I'm Sheriff Deeds-

MINNIE
Sheriff Deeds dead, honey- you just
Sheriff Junior.

SAM (smiles)
Yeah, that's the story of my life.

MINNIE
You ever play one of these?

SAM
I've seen em.

MINNIE

Well don't ever start up on em, cause once you do you can't stop. I tell myself I'm gonna play just three little games after breakfast, and here I sit with half the day gone.

SAM

You mind if I ask a few questions about your husband? Roderick?

MINNIE

I won't say nothing bad about the man, but you can ask away.

SAM

He had the club out on the old trail road-

MINNIE

We run that twenty-odd years. Give it over to Otis Payne in 1967. April.

SAM

So you must remember Sheriff Wade.

MINNIE

Them days, you deal with Sheriff Wade or you didn't deal. First of the month, every month, he remind you of who you really workin for.

SAM

He squeezed money out of you?

MINNIE

Wasn't legal to sell liquor in a glass back then unless you was a club, see. Roderick used to say, "Buy yourself a drink, you get a free membership." But Sheriff Wade, he could shut you down anytime.

SAM

And my father?

MINNIE

Sheriff Buddy was a different story. Long as Roderick throw his weight the right way on election day, make sure all the colored get out to vote- we was called colored back then, if you was polite- maybe throw a barbecue for the right people now and then, things was peaceful. Sheriff Buddy kept to his word. That Sheriff Wade, though, he could get ugly.

SAM
People didn't complain?

MINNIE
Not if they was colored or Meskin.
Not if they wanted to keep breathin.
I member last time I seen him before
he gone missin, he made a fuss in
our place.

We TRACK in to a close-up of her. R&B MUSIC FADES UP slowly-

MINNIE
He used to come in whilst we was in
full swing, make people nervous. Had
him a smile like the Grim Reaper-

DISSOLVE TO:

24 INT. MR. O'S - NIGHT - 1957

The joint is crowded, people drinking, talking, laughing, a few dancing, all trying to avoid locking eyes with Sheriff Wade, who sits with his legs stretched out at a table. Young Hollis sits by him, smiling uncomfortably. Sax-wailing R&B blasts from the jukebox. YOUNG OTIS, a slick, confident character with expensive shoes and a silk shirt on, in his early twenties, stops to talk with a MAN on his way to bring a tray with a couple beers and glasses over-

MINNIE (V.O.)
-just sit back with his hand on that
big ole gun and act the kingfish with
everybody. Otis Payne had come to
work for us by then, and that boy had
him some attitude-

CU WADE

Watching Young Otis with narrowed eyes-

CU WADE'S POV - OTIS

A man puts a slip of paper in Otis's pocket, pats his back. Otis winks to acknowledge the bet, turns, makes eyes at a PRETTY WOMAN sitting at the bar, who is eyeing him back. He lays the beers and glasses on the table, starts away-

WADE
Pour it.

Otis turns, cups his hand around his ear-

WADE
Pour it.

Expressionless, he starts to pour the beer into Wade's glass. The Sheriff looks up into his face-

WADE
I know you?

YOUNG OTIS
Name's Otis.

WADE
Otis what?

YOUNG OTIS
Payne. Call me O.

WADE
One of Cleroe Payne's boys?

YOUNG OTIS
Uh-huh.

WADE
I sent your Daddy to the farm once.

YOUNG OTIS
I know that.

WADE
Why you think that was?

Otis feels people watching. He doesn't want to lose face-

YOUNG OTIS
Some crop needed pickin and the man
was short-handed.

A very insolent answer for the time and place-

WADE
As I remember it was because he had
a sassy mouth on him. Must run in
the family. You wouldn't be runnin
numbers out of this club, now, would
you son?

YOUNG OTIS
Runnin numbers illegal.

WADE
Runnin numbers without I know about
it is both illegal and unhealthy.
You remember that.

The beer is poured. Otis starts away-

WADE
Whoah, son. You're not finished.
Pour his-

YOUNG HOLLIS
I prefer it in the bottle-

WADE
Shut up, Hollis. Pour.

Otis meets Wade's look now, pours the other beer-

WADE
How come you don't look familiar?

YOUNG OTIS
Been away. Up to Houston.

WADE
Houston, huh? I hear they let you
boys run wild up there.

No response. Wade deliberately pushes the glass away so beer
splashes on the table and drips into Hollis's lap-

WADE
Aw- look what you done now. Better
get something to wipe it up, son.

Half the people in the room are watching now, the other half
moving away to relative safety. Otis tries to keep a lid on
his temper, looks around the room-

YOUNG OTIS
You spilt it, you wipe it up.

Wade stands, steely-eyed, and looks at Otis nose to nose-

WADE
I told you to do something. Are you
gonna hop to it, or are we gonna have
a problem?

Otis is starting to shake, but holds his ground-

WADE
Don't want to turn tail in front of
your people. I understand.

He starts to turn away then WHAP! brings the butt of his
pistol up under Otis's chin, knocking him to the floor. A
woman SCREAMS and Otis, enraged, grabs the chair he has
fallen over, starts to get up- but Wade has the pistol
levelled at his face-

WADE
Come on, Houston, give it a try!
Come to Poppa-

RODERICK is out on the floor now, hands held out in a gesture
of peace, as YOUNG MINNIE watches from behind the bar,
petrified-

RODERICK
Don't mind him, Sheriff. Boy's just
a bit slow, is all. He don't mean
nothin by it-

WADE
That the problem, son? You slow?

RODERICK
Otis, apologize to the Sheriff-
Otis eases the chair down but doesn't say anything-

RODERICK
You got him too scared to peep,
Sheriff. Maybe if you put that gun
up-

WADE
You telling me what to do, Roderick?

RODERICK
No, Sheriff, I'm just-
Wade looks around, widens his eyes in mock surprise-

WADE
What's this I see? Is that whiskey
in them glasses on the bar?
Roderick, Imonna have to cite you for
a violation of State law-

RODERICK
This is a club, Sheriff- you been in
here-

WADE
All you people better clear out of
here! Now!

A few people start for the exit. Wade swivels and BLAM!
sends a bullet past Young Minnie that shatters a crystal
decanter behind the bar. People run for the door. Wade
squats down to look Otis in the face-

A24 INT. MR. O'S - (DAY) - CU WADE - (TRANSITION)

WADE
You learn how to act your place, son.
This idn't Houston.

He stands and we FOLLOW him toward the bar-

OTIS (V.O.)
Course I was young and full of beans
then-

The camera TILTS DOWN from Wade and instead of Minnie there
stands Otis, PRESENT DAY, reminiscing.

We are back in '95-

OTIS

-didn't understand the spot I was putting Roderick in.

SAM

And that was the last time you saw him?

We SHIFT to see Sam sitting where Wade was headed-

OTIS

Oh- I think he came in one more time with Hollis and- naw, your Daddy wasn't with them. Made their monthly pickup. Roderick wasn't in so I just kept my mouth good and shut and handed over that envelope.

SAM

That was the night he disappeared?

OTIS (shakes his head)

Could of been.

SAM

You own a gun?

OTIS

Back then? No.

SAM

How bout Roderick?

OTIS

He had a big ole piece he kept behind the bar, just so people knew it was there. I don't keep one here now- don't much care for em.

Sam nods, letting this slide-

SAM

And when my father was Sheriff?

OTIS

What about it?

SAM

What was your deal with him?

Otis chooses his words carefully-

OTIS

Buddy was more a part of the big picture- county political machine, chamber of commerce, zoning board- if I kept those people happy, he was pretty much on my side.

(smiles)

Whenever somebody thought they start up another bar for the black folks, they'd be- how should I put this? They'd be officially discouraged.

SAM

He ever accept cash for a favor?

Otis, looks away to ponder his response-

OTIS

I don't recall a prisoner ever died in your father's custody.

(more)

OTIS
(cont'd)

I don't recall a man in this town-
Black, White, Mexican- who'd hesitate
a minute before they'd call on Buddy
Deeds to solve a problem. More than
that I wouldn't like to say.

25 INT. CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Pilar drives Amado and Paloma home-

AMADO
So I'm supposed to tell all my
friends they're too low-class to hang
with-

PILAR
Oh come on, Amado-

AMADO
Just cause I'm not like Little Miss
Honor Roll here-

PILAR
Leave your sister out of it.

AMADO
You and all of the teachers in that
dump- your story's over, so you don't
want anybody else to have fun.

We see on Pilar's face that this has scored-

PALOMA
You jerk-

AMADO
I'm not talking to you. You don't
have any friends.

Pilar eases the car down San Jacinto street, seeing something
on the street and tuning her kids' conversation out-

PALOMA
Who'd want to be friends with that
bunch of pachuco wannabees?

AMADO
I don't pretend I came over on the
Mayflower-

PALOMA
And those stupid girls who hang out
with them-

AMADO
Just shut up.

PILAR'S POV - SAM

Sam walks on the sidewalk parallel to them, talking with three other MEN-

PALOMA (O.S.)

Joanie Orozco's telling the whole school she's like desperately in love with Santo Guerra.

AMADO (O.S.)

So?

PALOMA (O.S.)

It's pathetic. You can't be desperately in love when you're fourteen years old.

PILAR'S CAR

Pilar is still looking fixedly out the window-

PALOMA

Not if you have half a brain in your head.

PILAR

Of course you can.

PALOMA

What?

PILAR

It doesn't have anything to do with being smart.

26 EXT. SAN JACINTO STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

Danny Padilla is arguing with Fenton and JORGE GUERRA, a Council member in his 40's, and Sam, as they walk down the sidewalk of the main street-

JORGE

What I'm saying is I don't see the point. You had your chance when the dedication committee was meeting-

DANNY

I've got new information-

FENTON

It's ancient goddam history, Danny-

DANNY

1963, they dam up the north branch to make Lake Pescadero. A whole little town disappears-

FENTON
A squatter town-

DANNY
People had been living in Perdido for over a hundred years. Mexicans and Chicanos are deported, evicted, moved forcibly out of their houses by our local hero, Buddy Deeds, and his department-

JORGE
There was a bill from the State Legislature-

DANNY
Families were split apart, a whole community was destroyed-

FENTON
They were trespassing, Danny-

DANNY
-and who ends up with lakefront property bought for a fraction of the market price? Buddy Deeds, Sheriff of Rio County, and his Chief Deputy, Hollis Pogue.

Sam, who has been listening patiently the whole while, turns to face them-

SAM
You finished?

DANNY
Look, I'm not after you, Sam. I just think people in town ought to know the full story on Buddy Deeds.

SAM (nods)
That makes two of us.

Sam steps into his office, leaving Fenton shaking his head-

FENTON
You best be thankful that's the son and not the father. Buddy woulda kicked your ass from here to sundown.

27 INT. DEL'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

We TRACK down a hallway as Celie walks toward us, calling ahead. Chet stands in the middle of the hall behind her-

CELIE
I don't see what the big deal is. Go back over, talk to the man, and bury the hatchet.

DEL (O.S.)
 Why should I be the one? He had
 almost forty years, I didn't hear a
 word from him.

CELIE
 He was probably embarrassed-

Celie passes us and Del crosses back in the other direction
 from behind the camera, carrying boxes of their belongings.
 We continue our SLOW TRACK forward-

DEL
 Otis Payne was never embarrassed
 about a thing in his life.

CHET
 Dad-

CELIE (O.S.)
 Del, you were eight years old when he
 left-

DEL
 He didn't leave, he moved three
 houses down with one of my mother's
 best friends.

CHET
 Dad- ?

DEL
 "Hey, Delmore, where's your Daddy?"

Del disappears into the bedroom at the end of the hall-

DEL (O.S.)
 That godforsaken town, everybody into
 everybody else's business. And
 everybody loved Otis-

Del comes back out, empty-handed-

DEL
 Mr. O was always there with a smile
 or a loan or a free drink.

CHET
 Dad, can I talk to you about track?

CELIE (O.S.)
 People change.

DEL
 Not that much.

CHET
 Dad, I talked to the track coach-

DEL

I thought we already had this out?
Next year, if your grades are high
enough-

CHET

I have a B average.

DEL

How many B average students do you
think they take at West Point?

CELIE (O.S.)

Well we're stuck here for three
years, we're going to have to see him-

DEL

No we don't.

Del steps away past us, leaving Chet, defeated-

28 INT. CAFE - NIGHT - ENRIQUE

We start on Enrique, talking surreptitiously on the pay phone
on the way to the kitchen-

ENRIQUE

Sábado por la noche----- Si, es el
más seguro--- Voy a cruzar por la
mañana, y pues tendremos que
esperar--- [Friday night-- Yes,
that's the safest-- I'll cross in
the morning and then we'll have to
wait--]

Mercedes bustles by, snapping her fingers-

MERCEDES

Off the phone, Enrique, we've got
people waiting. Andale!

We FOLLOW Mercedes back into the kitchen, where she moves
through, kibbitzing the operation-

WAITRESS (O.S.)

Necesito las chuletas! [I need
porkchops!]

COOK (O.S.)

Listos! [Ready!]

Mercedes stops by a young girl prepping a pork loin to be
cooked. She isn't wearing gloves-

MERCEDES

Dónde están sus guantes? Tonta!
Quiere matar a mis clientes? [Where
are your gloves? Stupid! You want
to kill my customers?]

She continues past, shaking her head, bringing us to Pilar, who is trying to stay out of the way-

MERCEDES

These ones coming up are getting stupider every year.

PILAR

Maybe you're just getting less patient.

MERCEDES

If they're going to survive here, they have to know how to work. Flaco! Adelante! Los clientes esperan!

PILAR

Well, you hire illegals-

MERCEDES (indignant)

Nobody is illegal in my cafe! They've got green cards, they've got relatives who were born here- if they only had a little common sense I'd be very happy.

PILAR

If you spent a little more time training them-

MERCEDES

Did you come here to tell me how to run my business?

PILAR

No. I was wondering if you'd like to take a trip down south with us. Maybe see where you grew up-

MERCEDES

Why would I want to go there?

PILAR

Oh come on- you must be curious how it's changed. Amado is into this big Tejano roots thing and I've never been further than Ciudad Leon-

MERCEDES

You want to see Mexicans, open your eyes and look around you. We're up to our ears in them.

Pilar gives up on the trip. She watches her mother poking at the plates of chips and salsa ready to go out-

PILAR
Mami, how old were you when my father died?

MERCEDES
He was killed.

PILAR
Right. When he was killed.

MERCEDES
A little older than Paloma is now.

PILAR
How come you never got married again?
Mercedes just glares at her-

PILAR
There must have been somebody.

MERCEDES (mutters)
I was too busy.

PILAR
Nobody's too busy.

MERCEDES
Maybe now. It was different back then. I had this place, I was doing all the shopping, all the cooking- what do I need some chulo with grease under his nails to drink up the profit?

PILAR (pissed off)
Thank you.

MERCEDES
I don't mean Fernando.

PILAR
Mami, the first time I brought him home, those were your exact words- 'some chulo with grease under his nails'-

MERCEDES
I never said that.

PILAR
You made it pretty damn clear you thought he was nobody-

MERCEDES
I felt that you could do better for yourself-

PILAR

What? Become a nun? You didn't want me going out with Anglos-

MERCEDES

I never said that. It was just that boy-

PILAR

'That boy'- Mami, say his name for chrissakes!

The employees are staring. Mercedes won't look at her daughter as she steps out of the kitchen, banging into Enrique on his way back in-

MERCEDES

You people are stealing my money!
Entiende? Robándome!

Mercedes is gone. The young girl, pulling plastic gloves on, looks to Pilar-

GIRL

Su madre? [Your mother?]

PILAR

Si.

The girl puts her hand on her heart in sympathy-

GIRL

Lo siento. [My condolences.]

29 INT. COUNTRY AND WESTERN BAR - NIGHT

A crowded room. C&W MUSIC plays for the box. Sam sits behind a bottle of beer as the bartender, CODY, in his early 50's, philosophizes-

CODY

Now I'm just as liberal as the next guy-

SAM

If the next guy's a redneck.

CODY

-but I gotta say I think there's something to this cold climate business. I mean, you go to the beach- what do you do? Drink a few beers, wait for a fish to flop up on the sand. Can't build no civilization that way. You got a hard winter coming, though, you got to plan ahead, and that gives your cerebral cortex a workout.

SAM

Good deal you were born down here,
then.

CODY

You joke about it, Sam, but we are in
a state of crisis. The lines of
demarcation has gotten fuzzy- to run
a successful civilization you got to
have lines of demarcation between
right and wrong, between this one and
that one- your Daddy understood
that. He was like the whatchacallit-
the referee for this damn menudo we
got down here. He understood how
most people don't want their sugar
and salt in the same jar.

SAM

You mixed drinks bad as you mix
metaphors, you be out of a job.

CODY

You're the last white Sheriff this
town gonna see. Hollis retires next
year, That Jorge Guerra gonna tke
over. this is it right here, Sam,
this bar is the last stand. Se habla
American, goddammit, and even in here
it's slidin away. Take that pair
over in the corner-

*
*
*
*
*
*

Sam swivels to look where Cody points-

CODY

Place like this, twenty years ago,
Buddy woulda been on them two-

SAM'S POV - CORNER BOOTH

Cliff and Priscilla talk across a table-

CODY (O.S.)

He would of went over there and give
them a warning. Not cause he had it
in for the colored-

SAM AND CODY

CODY

-but just as a kind of safety tip.

SAM

Yeah. I bet he would.

CODY

Old Sam stood for somethin, you know?
The day that man died they broke the
goddam mold.

BOOTH - CLIFF AND PRISCILLA

Things are obviously more than professional between these two-

CLIFF

Colonel Payne not only read the rule book backwards and forwards, he wrote the introduction-

PRISCILLA

So where does that put us?

CLIFF

We're not officially in the same command, so I don't see what's changed. We show the usual military discretion- no necking on the obstacle course-

*
*
*
*
*

PRISCILLA

Seriously.

CLIFF

Seriously, I think we should get married.

PRISCILLA

We been through this before-

CLIFF

We should just do it.

PRISCILLA

And if I get transferred to a different post? Germany, Korea-

*
*

CLIFF

I'd ask for a transfer too-

*

PRISCILLA

Which they're most likely to turn down-

*
*

CLIFF

I'd quit the Army for you, if it came to that.

PRISCILLA (grins)

Man's gonna retire in two years and he offer to quit. Big goddam deal.

SAM (O.S.)

Excuse me-

They look up to see Sam standing over them-

CLIFF

Sheriff- hi- this is Sergeant- this is Priscilla Worth-

SAM

Pleased to meet you.

CLIFF

Sheriff Deeds was in on our archeological find yesterday.

PRISCILLA

It true they gonna build a shopping mall out there?

SAM

If certain people have their way it's going to be a new jail.

PRISCILLA

Damn. Maybe we got in the wrong business. They closin down military left and right, puttin up jails like 7-11 stores.

SAM

Do either of you have any idea when they stopped using that site as a rifle range?

CLIFF

Fort McKenzie stopped training infantry there in the late fifties. It was just a playground for the jackrabbits till they gave it to the county last year.

PRISCILLA

You know who it was they dug up?

SAM

Not for sure yet. But I kind of wish they hadn't.

30 EXT. CAFE - NIGHT

Enrique steps out of the darkened cafe, followed by Mercedes, who locks up. Mercedes steps over to an expensive-looking car-

ENRIQUE

Es muy lindo, su coche-

MERCEDES

En inglés, Enrique. This is the United States. We speak English.

ENRIQUE

Is very beautiful, your car.

MERCEDES

Good night, Enrique.

She slides into the car-

ENRIQUE

Buenas noches, Señora Cruz.

Enrique walks in the opposite direction-

FADE OUT:

31 EXT. MR. O'S ROADHOUSE - DAY - CU DEL ..

Del, in uniform, approaches the front door of MR. O's, not open for business yet. We TIGHTEN as he stops to read a hand-lettered sign next to it- BLACK SEMINOLE EXHIBIT - REAR ENTRANCE. He steps in-

32 INT. MR. O'S - DAY

Late 50's R&B plays on the JUKEBOX. Otis stands behind the counter hooking the beer taps up. Del steps in and sits on a stool at the far end of the bar, tense, looking around the place. When Otis sees him he stops dead. They lock eyes for a moment, then Otis turns to call-

OTIS
Carolyn- knock that off for a minute.

CAROLYN

CAROLYN SYKES, an attractive woman maybe ten years younger than Otis, pulls the plug from the jukebox near where she's scrubbing blood stains off the floor. She turns to look at the newcomer-

BAR

Del doesn't move to come closer-

DEL
Black Seminoles?

OTIS (shrugs)
Hobby of mine. Got some artifacts,
couple pieces one of your men out at
the base made. Free admission.

Del nods toward where Carolyn is mopping-

DEL
That where he was shot?.

OTIS
That's where he fell.

DEL
You get much of that in here?

OTIS
It's a bar. People come together,
drink, fall in love, fall out of
love, air their grudges out-

DEL
Deal drugs in the bathroom-

OTIS (sarcastic)
If I thought it would help I'd put up
a sign telling them not to. Right
under the one about the employees
washing their hands.

Carolyn has come over by Otis, lugging the bucket and mop-

OTIS
This here's Carolyn. Honey, this is
my son, Delmore.

DEL
Nice to meet you, M'am.

Carolyn nods, shoots a look to Otis-

CAROLYN
I'll be in back waiting for that
delivery.

They wait till she is gone to start again-

OTIS
So.

DEL
So tell me why I shouldn't make this
place off-limits.

OTIS
This is an official visit, then-

DEL
I assume a lot of your business is
from our people.

Otis pulls a tap back and it coughs before squirting beer-

OTIS
Your boys out there cooped up
together, need somewhere they can let
the steam out. If they're Black,
there's not but one place in this
county they feel welcome. Been that
way since before you were born.

DEL
We have an enlisted man's club at the
post.

OTIS
Well you're the Man out there, now,
aren't you? It's your call.

DEL
That's right.

OTIS (smiles)

I been hearing rumors about this new commander coming for a couple weeks now. Boys say they heard he's a real hard case. Spit and polish man. Full bird Colonel name of Payne, they say. Bet you never figured you'd end up back here.

DEL

The Army offers you a command, you go wherever it is.

OTIS

Right.

DEL

I hear things too. People call you the Mayor of Darktown.

OTIS (shrugs)

Over the years, this is the one place that's always been there. I loan a little money out, settle some arguments. Got a cot in the back-people get afraid to go home they can spend the night. There's not enough of us to run anything in this town-the white people are mostly out on the lake now and the Mexicans hire each other. There's the Holiness Church and there's Mr. O's.

DEL

And people make their choice-

OTIS (smiles)

A lot of em choose both. There's not like a borderline between the good people and the bad people- you're not either on one side or the other-

Del looks away, not wanting to believe this-

OTIS (softly)

I gonna meet that family of yours?

DEL

Why would you want to do that?

OTIS

Because I'm your father.

Del gives him a dark look and lets the statement hang between them. He gets up and heads for the door-

DEL

You'll get official notification when I make my decision.

He is out the door. Otis pulls himself a beer as Carolyn steps back out-

CAROLYN
So that's him-

OTIS
Yeah- that's him. Got nearly a thousand people under him out there, you count the civilians.

CAROLYN
That must be a laugh a minute.

33 EXT. SAN JACINTO STREET - DAY

Sam walks down the main street of town. A CROWD is gathering at the other end for the ceremony-

FENTON (O.S.)
Sheriff!

We WIDEN as Fenton and Jorge catch up to him. Fenton slaps Sam on the back-

FENTON
Historic occasion, isn't it?

SAM
Seems like we have another one every week.

FENTON
Jorge and his Chamber of Commerce boys got to keep things hummin-

JORGE
We're building up tourism, Sam-

SAM
People come here to catch bass and to get laid at the Boy's Town in Ciudad León. You ought to put up a banner- 'Frontera, Texas - Gateway to Inexpensive Pussy'-

FENTON
That kind of talk doesn't help-

SAM
Rather have that than the ten-foot high catfish statue-

JORGE
I got Eddie Richter at the Sentinel to kill that story, Sam.

SAM
The Perdido thing?

JORGE

He agreed it wasn't exactly news-

SAM

Danny's gonna be out for blood the next time.

FENTON

Which is why we need to talk to you about the new jail- just so we're all on the same page.

SAM

We don't need a new jail.

FENTON

That's a matter of interpretation-

SAM

We're already renting cells to the Feds for their overflow-

JORGE

There was a mandate in the last election-

SAM

It wouldn't happen to be your construction company gonna get the bid on building this thing, would it, Fenton? And Jorge, you wouldn't be thinking about a couple dozen new jobs to dangle in front of the voters when you run for mayor next election-

FENTON

Dammit, Sam, the people are concerned about crime-

SAM

We need a drug re-hab program, we need a new elementary school-

JORGE

There isn't money allocated for that. But a jail-

SAM

Look, I'm not gonna campaign against your deal here, but if anybody asks me, I got to tell them the truth. We don't- need- a new- jail.

FENTON

When we backed you-

SAM

When you backed me you needed
somebody named Deeds to bump the
other fella out of office. Hey,
folks-

Sam and the others smile as they have reached the CROWD of townspeople, mostly small business owners and retired people. Photographers from the paper and a local TV news crew wait by them. Mercedes, dressed to kill, stands next to Hollis with a huge pair of scissors in her hand-

CU MERCEDES

Slowly working the blades of the scissors, she looks coldly at Sam-

CU SAM

He nods to her as the crowd opens a path for him-

SAM

Let's get this thing over with.

34 INT. MIKEY'S WORKSHOP - MORNING

We start on a two-foot high statue of a cowboy made from old bullets and shell casings. We PAN past a few others, the poses lifted from Frederick Remington paintings, till we see Mikey, gluing together a work in progress, a Remington book propped open in front of him. Cliff sits at the work table playing absently with the old bullets spilled out from Mikey's bag-

MIKEY

Never thought I'd see the day a buddy
of mine was dating a woman with three
up and three down on her shoulder.

CLIFF

I think it's beyond what you'd call
dating.

MIKEY

You going to get married?

CLIFF (shrugs)

Maybe.

MIKEY

You met her family? They gonna be
cool about you being a white guy?

CLIFF

Priscilla says they think any woman
over thirty who isn't married must be
a lesbian. She figures they'll so
relieved I'm a man-

MIKEY

Always heartwarming to see a prejudice defeated by a deeper prejudice. But marriage, man- I did two tours in Southeast Asia and I was married for five years- I couldn't tell you which experience was worse.

Cliff picks up a slug-

CLIFF

Hey, Mikey-

MIKEY

I knew she was Japanese going into it, but she didn't tell me the ninja assassin part-

CLIFF

Mikey-

MIKEY

Her parents acted like I was gonna blow my nose on their curtains-

CLIFF

Mikey-

MIKEY

If I stayed out past ten with the guys she'd go into her Madame Butterfly routine-

CLIFF

Mikey, look at this-

MIKEY

What- it's a bullet. I'm lousy with bullets here.

CLIFF

It's a .45.

MIKEY

Yeah?

CLIFF

This is the stuff we picked up the other day, right? The rest of this is all .30 caliber-

MIKEY

They were using M-1s, yeah-

CLIFF

What's a pistol slug doing on a rifle range?

Mikey holds the slug in front of his face-

MIKEY

We better call that Sheriff.

35 EXT. PARK - DAY

Hollis is finishing his oration, having put the crowd in a good mood-

HOLLIS

Sometime in the early seventies a reporter from a national magazine was talking to the governor of our Lone Star state, and he asked him "Governor, what's your ideal of what a real Texan ought to be?" Governor said "That's easy, son- you just go down to Rio County and get a look at Sheriff Buddy Deeds."

Applause-

SAM

Watching the crowd-

SAM'S POV

We PAN with his gaze across smiling faces, till he comes to Danny and a couple Chicano friends, looking grim. We RACK FOCUS beyond them to see Pilar, watching the ceremony from a few yards back-

HOLLIS (O.S.)

Thank you. We've got one more person to hear from-

HOLLIS

HOLLIS

-and he's somebody who probably knew Buddy better than any of us. Sam- would you say a few words?

SAM

Not thrilled to be called on. He steps forward reluctantly to APPLAUSE-

SAM

You folks who remember my father knew him as Sheriff. But at home he was also judge, jury-

He looks to Hollis-

SAM

-and executioner.

LAUGHTER. Sam holds Hollis's eyes for a moment before continuing-

SAM
This is a real honor you're doing him today, and if Buddy was around I'm sure his hat size would be gettin bigger every minute.

PILAR

Watching-

SAM (O.S.)
I used to think there wasn't a place in this town you could hide from my old man.

SAM

Looks at plaque-

SAM
Now I'm sure of it.

More LAUGHTER-

SAM
I do appreciate it, though, and wherever he is, Buddy's puttin the beer on ice for the bunch of you. Thank you.

APPLAUSE. Sam steps back and Mercedes steps forward with her scissors without looking at him-

HOLLIS
And now my favorite Council member and one of Frontera's most respected businesswomen, Mrs. Mercedes Cruz, will do the honors for us-

MERCEDES

She freezes, smiling, till the still photographers have gotten their shots, then snips the cord to a pulley system that lets the cloth drop-

STATUE

The cloth drops to reveal a bas relief in brass set in a block of smooth limestone. A decent likeness of Buddy in uniform, his hand on the shoulder of a small Mexican-looking boy who stands beside him, eyes raised worshipfully. APPLAUSE from the gathering-

SAM

Watching, a bit removed, as Mercedes flanks the statue with Hollis for the cameras-

JORGE (O.S.)
It does look kind of like Buddy.

FENTON (O.S.)
I think he's gonna run that Mexican
kid in for loiterin-

The men LAUGH. Sam steps away, intercepting Mercedes as she
steps away-

SAM
Nice to see you, Mrs. Cruz.

Mercedes just looks at him, keeps going. His gaze brings him
to Pilar, standing on the sidewalk, watching. Sam steps over
from the dispersing crowd-

SAM
Field trip?

PILAR
Lunch hour. My next class isn't till
one thirty.

SAM
Want to take a walk?

36 EXT. RIVERSIDE - DAY

Sam and Pilar walk together alongside the Rio-

SAM
Your mother still doesn't like me.

PILAR
I can't name anybody she does like
these days.

SAM
I see she built a place out there by
the river.

PILAR
A real palace. She rattles around
alone in that thing-

SAM
She's done well for herself- on her
own and all-

PILAR
So she tells me three times a week.

She looks at him-

PILAR
I thought you got through that
ceremony pretty well.

SAM

They cooked the whole thing up
without asking me.

PILAR

People liked him.

SAM

Most people did, yeah.

PILAR

I remember him watching me once.
When I was little- before you and I-

She shrugs-

PILAR

I was on the playground with all the
other kids but I thought he was only
looking at me. I was afraid he was
going to arrest me- he had those
eyes, you know-

SAM

Yeah.

PILAR

Weird what you remember.

They walk in silence a moment-

SAM

Your boy, there-

PILAR

Amado.

SAM

Nice-looking kid.

PILAR

He hates me.

SAM

No-

PILAR

With Paloma it's more like she pities
and tolerates me- totally age-
appropriate. But Amado- he's- he's
never been book-smart. Had a hard
time learning to read. Me being a
teacher and caring about those things
is like an embarrassment- like a
betrayal.

SAM

Fernando did okay, and he dropped out-

PILAR

Fernando wasn't pissed-off at everybody. He just wanted to fix their cars.

SAM

It might just be the age. I spent my first fifteen years trying to be just like Buddy and the next fifteen trying to give him a heart attack.

She looks at him-

PILAR

So why did you come back here, Sam?

SAM

Got divorced, I wasn't gonna work for my father-in-law anymore. The fellas down here said they'd back me-

PILAR

You don't want to be Sheriff.

SAM

I got to admit it's not what I thought it'd be. Back when Buddy had it- hell, I'm just jailer. Run a 60-room hotel with bars on the windows.

PILAR

It can happen so sudden, can't it? Being left out on your own.

SAM

You've got your mother, your kids-

PILAR

They've got me. Different thing.

They stop at a spot where you can climb down the bank-

SAM

Remember this?

Pilar looks at the spot. She isn't ready to deal with whatever memory it brings back-

PILAR

I should get back.

SAM

Pilar-

PILAR

Looks real bad if the teacher's late for class. It's really nice to talk with you, Sam.

She waves and walks away, feeling awkward. Sam watches for a minute, then turns and steps down to the bank. He looks at the water-

RIVER SURFACE

A little piece of tree bark is tossed onto the water and drifts away with the current. We TILT UP to see YOUNG PILAR tossing bark into the river as YOUNG SAM sits on the bank beside her. They are 14 and 15 years old-

It is 1972-

YOUNG SAM

You going to tell her?

YOUNG PILAR

You going to tell him?

YOUNG SAM

He doesn't need to know all my business.

YOUNG PILAR

He's gonna find out.

YOUNG SAM

So? What's he gonna do, arrest us?

Young Pilar frowns, tosses more bark-

YOUNG PILAR

It's supposed to be some big sin, even if you love each other.

YOUNG SAM

You believe that?

CU YOUNG PILAR

She turns to look at him-

YOUNG PILAR

No.

We PAN with her gaze to see Sam, PRESENT DAY, sitting on the bank, lost in thought-

SAM

Me neither.

37 EXT. ARMY POST - DAY

Athena walking between buildings, looking a bit out of it. Sergeant Worth cuts into her-

PRISCILLA

Private Johnson!

ATHENA
First Sergeant?

PRISCILLA
Report to Sergeant Burr at the
orderly room. Doctor gonna have a
look at you.

ATHENA
I'm feeling okay-

PRISCILLA
I'm very happy to hear that, Private.
Now you go put some pee-pee in a cup
for Dr. Innis and I'll be feeling
okay too.

ATHENA (reacts)
You're testing me?

PRISCILLA
You and one hundred nineteen other
fortunate individuals. Put it in
gear.

ATHENA
Yes, First Sergeant.

Sergeant Worth watches Athena go, suspicious-

38 INT. JAIL - HALLWAY/SAM'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Ray Hernandez and another DEPUTY guide Shadow back in from
the courthouse in handcuffs-

RAY
Excellent performance, my friend.
The judge was very impressed.

SHADOW
You cantake this shit off now.

RAY
You been talking so much trash today,
you made us think you're a dangerous
criminal. Be a good boy, now-

They guide him past the open door of SAM'S OFFICE-

SHADOW
You're the one who's a good boy. Man
say 'fetch' and you fetch-

RAY
Just doing my job.

SHADOW
White man just using you to keep the
Black man down.

RAY

This isn't Houston, my friend. We pretty much running things now. Our good day has come.

SHADOW

You suckers haven't had a good day since the Alamo.

Ray smiles, pushes him out-

RAY

Andale, amigo.

We HOLD on Sam at his desk, TIGHTENING as he holds the .45 slug from the Sergeants in front of his eyes-

SAM

Lupe? Get me Ben Wetzel up in Austin-

39 OMIT

40 EXT. MERCEDES' HOUSE - BACK PATIO - NIGHT - CU GLASS

We hear old MEXICAN MUSIC. Ice cubes plunk into a glass-
WIDER, MERCEDES

Mercedes, exhausted from a day at the cafe, pours herself a scotch and soda. She sinks into a recliner. We TIGHTEN as she closes her eyes. Something RUSTLES out in the dark. Mercedes opens her eyes. There is WHISPERING. Mercedes sits up and suddenly two MEN run past the edge of the patio toward the front of the house. Mercedes sighs-

MERCEDES

Otra vez los mojados- [Wetbacks
again-]

Mercedes searches to find a portable phone on the patio table, punches a number in-

MERCEDES

Hello? Border Patrol?

41 EXT. SAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sam, out of uniform, stands behind his little house chucking fallen pecans out into the dark, thinking, listening to the night sounds-

CU SAM

Working something out in his head. He looks off into the dark and we PAN with his gaze-

CU SAM

Working something out in his head. He looks off into the dark and we PAN with his gaze-

A MAN steps toward us, barely visible in the darkness. It is Charley Wade-

We're in Sam's REVERY, in 1957-

WADE

Who is that? Come out here where I can see you!

BLAM! A GUNSHOT, and Wade falls to his knees-

WADE

You sonofabitch-

Wade falls on his face. A FLASHLIGHT BEAM flicks ON and plays over his body. We PAN back along the beam to see Buddy, holstering his pistol. He hears something, swings the flashlight up-

SAM

We are back in 1995. Sam is blasted in the face with a FLASHLIGHT BEAM-

PATROLMAN (O.S.)

Hold it right there! Brazos arriba!

Sam, squinting toward the light to see who it is, raises his arms over his head-

ZACK (O.S.)

Get that thing off im! He's one of ours-

SAM

Zack?

The FLASHLIGHT BEAM PANS AWAY and ZACK POLLARD, a Border Patrol agent, steps out of the dark to Sam-

ZACK

Hey. Sam. Sorry bout that.

SAM

What's up?

ZACK

We had about a dozen wets come over just upriver. They ran into one of our posts- it was like a breakshot on a pool table, illegals runnin every whichway-

ZACK

We'll get em.

(looks around)

So you livin out here now?

SAM

Yeah. It's quiet-

ZACK

I heard about that deal for your father. You must be real proud.

SAM

Sure.

ZACK

The stories people tell, he was a real colorful fella-

PATROLMAN (O.S.)

Zack! We got one!

ZACK

Well- back on the clock. You see any of our neighbors from the south, let em know I'm lookin for em.

SAM

'Night.

Zack steps away. Sam shakes the pecans still in his hand, goes back to chucking them-

42 EXT. RESTAURANT PATIO/APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Older CHICANO COUPLES listen to romantic Mexican MUSIC playing from speakers on the dining patio. We TILT UP and RACK to see Enrique watching from his window at the apartment building next door-

43 INT. ENRIQUE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Enrique steps away from the window, MUSIC still blasting in, and sits on the bed of his drab furnished apartment. He goes back to tying knots in a length of clothesline, splicing it to another. On the bed beside him are two new flashlights and the batteries, still in their packaging. He begins to coil the rope- it is hundreds of feet long-

44 EXT. PILAR'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Pilar sits on her front porch, listening to the MUSIC in the distance. A woman singing a MEXICAN LOVE BALLAD. After a while we hear Paloma open the screen door behind her-

PALOMA (O.S.)

Mom?

*

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PILAR
Yeah?

PALOMA (O.S.)
You gonna stay out here?

PILAR
For a while.

A silence. They listen to the RECORD-

PALOMA (O.S.)
What's she singing about?

PILAR (smiles)
What do you think?

FADE OUT:

45 INT. JAIL - SAM'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

Sam has been up since dawn, searching through piles of old department records. Papers cover his desk and the chairs he's dragged over next to it-

DOCUMENTS - VARIOUS SHOTS

As Sam reads we see quick pops of various records-

Certificates of death.

An old Sheriff Department payroll.

An autopsy report.

Eviction notices.

Real estate transfers.

A map of the proposed Lake Pescadero.

Another autopsy report.

A FAX copy of the forensics dental report on Charley Wade.

Another autopsy report-

CU SAM

Intent as he pores over the paperwork-

LEGAL PAD

We TILT DOWN to read various notes Sam has written-

Reynaldo Garcia killed by Shf Wade - 3/49

Hollis Kinney hired by Shf Dep. - 9/51

Lucas Johnson k. by Shf Wade - 7/53

Horace Gaines k. by Shf Wade - 1/54

Santiago Huerta k. by Shf Wade - 4/54

Rifle range closed - 9/56

Eladio Cruz k. by Shf Wade - 12/56

Buddy Deeds hired by Shf Dep. - 2/57

Shf Wade disappears - 3/57 \$10,000 cnty funds missing -
Buddy Deeds new Shf

We come to Sam's hand, writing. When it clears we can read the last entry-

Mercedes Cruz hired as cook, Rio Co. jail - 4/57 ?????

CU SAM

Trying to put it all together. PETE ZAYAS, a skinny, older man in trustee's coveralls, wanders in, emptying the trash baskets in the front office-

PETE
Morning, Sheriff.

SAM
Hey Pete. How's it going?

PETE
Time marches on.

SAM
How much you got left?

PETE
Three months.

SAM
You stop growing that loco weed at your place you'd see a lot more daylight.

PETE
It was for personal consumption.

SAM

You're going to smoke an acre and a half of marijuana?

PETE

I got a bad stomach. It helps me digest.

Pete dumps the basket by Sam out-

PETE

Your father never bothered me about it. Leastways not till the drug people got on his back in the late '60's.

SAM

I thought he busted you a couple times.

PETE

Different charge. I had a still. Made my own mescal.

Sam looks up at him-

PETE

That's how I ruined my stomach.

SAM (smiles)

I'm surprised he bothered with it.

PETE

He was afraid I was going to poison somebody. Your father tried to do good for people-

SAM

So I've heard-

PETE

And your mother was a saint. That summer I built the patio at your house? She made me lunch every day.

SAM

Well, you were working there-

PETE

It could have just been a box lunch from the jail.

Sam looks up again, troubled-

SAM

You built our patio while you were on the county?

PETE

Out in the fresh air, nice gringo lady making you pies- who's gonna sit back in a little jail cell all day? Sheriff Buddy, man. Como el no hay dos. And after that cabrón Charley Wade-

SAM

I've heard Wade was a bit tough on the Mexicans-

PETE

He murdered Eladio Cruz. That tough enough for you?

SAM

Murdered him?

PETE

Chucho Montoya saw it with his own eyes. Shot him in cold blood.

46 EXT. JAIL - MORNING

Ray Hernandez, heading in to work, comes upon Sam getting into his car-

RAY

You're out early.

SAM

Yeah.

RAY

Haven't seen much of you at the jail lately.

SAM

I been working on a few things.

RAY

Uh-huh.

SAM

I'm going over to the other side.

RAY (concerned)

The Republicans?

SAM

No- to Mexico. I've got to talk to somebody.

RAY

They got telephones.

SAM

Gotta be in person.

RAY

Oh.

An awkward silence. Sam sits into the driver's seat and Ray leans down to talk-

RAY

Sam? I- the Committee- you know- Jorge and Fenton and all- they asked me-

SAM

They want you to stand for Sheriff next election.

RAY

Yeah.

SAM

You'd do a good job.

RAY

How bout you?

SAM

Don't know if I'll still want it.

RAY

I didn't want to be going around your back.

SAM

I appreciate you telling me.

Sam looks at his chief deputy-

SAM

You think we need a new jail?

RAY

Well, it's a complicated issue-

Sam smiles, turns the engine on-

SAM

Yeah, Ray, you'd be a hell of a Sheriff.

47 EXT. PILAR'S HOUSE - MORNING

We start on spangled lettering- "FERNANDO" - then pull back to see Amado working on the engine of a beautiful late-60's low-rider propped up on cinder blocks, tires missing. Pilar stands talking to him, dressed for school-

PILAR

I'm only going to have you for two more years. If you decide not to go on to college-

AMADO
I can't take any more school.

PILAR
-you're going to be on your own.

AMADO
So?

PILAR
So I'm worried about you. I don't
want you to end up in jail like your
friends.

AMADO
They're not going to jail.

PILAR
Don't try to con me, Amado. You knew
how they got all those things.

AMADO
Just some rich Anglo out on the lake.
Don't even live here all year.

PILAR
That makes it okay?

AMADO
They stole our land-

PILAR
Save your breath. That line doesn't
cut it with me.

A silence. Amado sulks-

PILAR
How do you think you're going to make
a living?

AMADO
I can fix cars.

PILAR
You can fix old cars. Mr. Washburn
told me that that the cars they're
making now are all computerized-

AMADO
You and Grandma think anybody who
works with their hands is a peasant.

PILAR
That isn't true-

AMADO
When Dad-

PILAR

If you grew up to be anywhere near as good a man as your father was, I would be happy! I would be thrilled.

They look at each other for a long moment. Pilar is nearly in tears-

PILAR

Honey, I think you're smart and you're good and I love you. So don't act like an idiot, alright?

48 EXT. BORDER CROSSING - DAY

We see Sam's car roll through the inspection booths and onto the bridge over the Rio as PEDESTRIANS cross, carrying bags of purchases-

49 EXT. CIUDAD LEON - STREETS - VARIOUS SHOTS

Sam drives slowly through the sprawling, more populous town on the other side. Prettier, narrower streets, a big more colorful. As he passes an old hotel we PAN with the car till we HOLD on ANSELMA, a country girl of 15, aimlessly walking the streets-

50 EXT. LLANTERIA (TIRE REPAIR SHOP) - DAY

We watch a KID about Amado's age pulling a tire off its rim to put a patch on it-

CHUCHO (O.S.)

Over here we don't throw everything away like you gringos do.

CHUCHO AND SAM

CHUCHO MONTOYA, in his mid-50's, stands drinking a Coke by Sam as they watch the kid work-

CHUCHO

Recycling, right? We invented that. The government doesn't have to tell people to do it.

SAM

You own this place?

CHUCHO

This place, the one across the street, four other ones around Ciudad León- soy el Rey de las Llantas. King of the Tires. Lots of your people rollin back over that bridge on my rubber.

SAM (nods)

You lived in the States for a while?

CHUCHO
Fifteen years in El Paso.

SAM
Made some money, came back here-

CHUCHO
Something like that.

SAM
You ever know a fella named Eladio Cruz?

Chucho smiles, draws a line in the dirt with his heel-

CHUCHO
You the Sheriff of Rio County, right?
Un jefe muy respetado. Step over
this line-

Sam obliges-

CHUCHO
Ay qué milagro! You're not the
Sheriff of nothing anymore- just some
tejano with a lot of questions I
don't have to answer.

Sam smiles, plays with the line with his toe-

CHUCHO
Bird flying south- you think he sees
that line? Rattlesnake, javelina-
whatever you got- halfway across that
line they don't start thinking
different. So why should a man?

SAM
Your government always been pretty
happy to have that line. The
question's just been where to draw it-

A50 EXT. ARROYO - CU CHUCHO - (TRANSITION)

CHUCHO
My government can go fuck itself, and
so can yours. I'm talking about
people here- men. Mi amigo Eladio
Cruz is giving some friends of his a
lift in his camión one day-

We PAN from Chucho to the FLAT TIRE on a battered old pickup
truck-

CHUCHO
-but because he's on one side of this
invisible line and not the other,
they got to hide in the back like
criminals-

ELADIO CRUZ, young and good-looking, squats into the shot to examine the tire, jack in hand. It is 1956-

CHUCHO (V.O.)

And because over there he's just another Mex bracero, any man with a badge is his jefe-

CONJUNTO MUSIC comes from the truck RADIO. YOUNG CHUCHO steps past Eladio-

ELADIO

Dónde vas, Chucho? Tienes que quedar escondido! [Where you going, Chucho, you got to stay hidden!]

YOUNG CHUCHO

Voy a romper las riñones si no hago pipi- [I'm gonna bust my kidneys if I don't pee-]

We TRACK back with Young Chucho to see we on a bridge in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by the scrubby hills near the river. Eladio's battered pickup truck has wood-slat sides and a canvas top. Eladio begins to undo the nuts on the flat tire as Young Chucho climbs down into a deep chasm to relieve himself-

YOUNG CHUCHO

Los demás son tan espantados que prefieran mojar sus pantalones. [The other guys are so scared they'd rather wet their pants.]

Chucho tightens as he sees something, ducks down-

YOUNG CHUCHO

Mira, Eladio! [Look!]

We PAN to see the Sheriff's car approaching in a cloud of DUST-

ELADIO

Calling from where he lies changing the tire-

ELADIO

Muchachos! Escóndases! [Boys! Hide yourselves!]

B50 INT. REAR OF TRUCK

Eight illegal WORKERS hear this and lie down, pulling a canvas tarp over themselves. We hear the CAR STOP behind them-

A50 (CONT.) EXT. ARROYO - CU CHUCHO

He makes the sign of the cross as he presses his back against the dirt of the arroyo-

ROAD

Sheriff Wade and Young Hollis get out of their car and start toward Eladio-

ELADIO

He stands, takes a deep breath- Wade steps up to him with his hard-eyed smile-

WADE

Hola, amigo. Problemas de llanta?
[Hey, friend. Tire problems?]

ELADIO

No hay de qué. Tengo otra. [No
problem, I've got another.]

WADE

What's in the back?

EXT. TRUCK

Young Hollis strolls around the truck as if he's considering buying it. He reaches in and flicks the RADIO OFF-

ELADIO

Not much, jefe. Some watermelons.

WADE

I heard somebody been haulin wets on
this road.

ELADIO

I haven't seen anybody doing that.

WADE

This same person been bragging all
over the county how he don't have to
cut that big gringo Sheriff in on it-
he can run his own operation thout
any help. Cómo se llama, amigo?

ELADIO

Eladio Cruz.

WADE

You know this road got a bad
reputation, Eladio-

ARROYO - CHUCHO

Young Chucho peeks over the edge to see what's happening-

ELADIO
Reputation?

WADE
Bandidos, Injuns-

CLOSER - MEN

Hollis wanders over to stand by Wade-

WADE
There's many an unfortunate soul been
ambushed out on this stretch. Hope
you're carrying some protection.

ELADIO
Protection?

WADE
You carryin a firearm, son? Don't
lie to me now.

ELADIO
Si- tengo escopeto- just a shotgun-

WADE
Just a shotgun, huh? Better let me
take a look at that.

Eladio opens the truck door and digs under the seat. Wade
winks to Hollis, then turns and BLAM! shoots Eladio through
the head. Hollis jumps back, startled and horrified-

YOUNG HOLLIS
Oh no- oh Jesus- oh my Lord-

WADE
Little greaser sonavabitch been
running a goddam bus service. Think
he can make a fool out of Charley
Wade! Get them wets outa the back,
Hollis, see what we've got-

CU CHUCHO

Squatting in a ball to make himself as small as possible,
eyes covered with his hands-

YOUNG HOLLIS (O.S.)
You killed him-

WADE (O.S.)
You got a talent for statin the
obvious, son. Muchachos! Venga
afuera! Brazos arribas! [Come on
out! Hands up!]

Young Chucho hears FOOTSTEPS approaching. We PAN as he looks-
a man's BOOTS appear at the top of the arroyo.

to see a Sheriff, BACKLIT, then CRANE to see it is Sam, back in the PRESENT looking over the site, troubled. His car sits on the empty road behind him. He frowns, turns to go-

51 EXT. PARK - DAY - MEMORIAL

Somebody has spray-painted PERDIDO! over the memorial of Buddy and the little boy-

HOLLIS (O.S.)
Hooligans-

WIDER

Hollis and a couple MEN from the Public Works Department look at the damage-

HOLLIS
It happens again we build a fence around it.

52 INT. CAFE - DAY

Enrique steels himself, trying to cover his nerves. We CROSS with him to a booth-

ZACK
-podemos ganar muchas batallas pero la guerra ya es perdido-

Zack and another BORDER PATROLMAN look up at Enrique-

CU ENRIQUE

Eyes glued to his notepad-

ENRIQUE
You wan' something to drink?

53 EXT. ROADSIDE STAND - DAY - CU CATTLE SKULL

A Georgia O'Keefe-looking cattle skull sits on a pedestal against the Western sky-

WESLEY (O.S.)
The longhorns go for ten times the price-

We WIDEN as the skull is lifted by WESLEY BIRDSONG, a Native American man in his 70's who wears extremely thick glasses. Sam tags along as the old man rearranges the display of Texas curios laid out in front of his trailer. Empty scrubland surrounds them-

WESLEY
-but longhorns are hard to come by these days.

77A*.

SAM
You sell much out here?

WESLEY

How am I gonna sell things if nobody comes by? This stretch of road runs between Nowheres and Nothin Much.

SAM

Hell of a spot to put a business.

WESLEY

But you don't see much competition, do you?

He winks at Sam, picks up a wooden radio carved to resemble the Alamo-

WESLEY

These things used to sell like hotcakes. Now, if it can't play those discs they won't look at it.

He puts the radio down, looks out at the emptiness around-

WESLEY

I like it here. Once I tried going onto that reservation to live. Couldn't take the politics. Damn Indians'll drive you crazy with that. Now your father- this wasn't what he had in mind at all. He come out of Korea, he had this Chevy with too much engine in it. He'd come roarin up and down this road all hours of the day and night, looking for somebody to race.

He lifts a jar with a leathery brown thing in it-

WESLEY

Buffalo chips. Fella in Santa Fe told me he sells these as fast as the buffalo can squeeze em out.

SAM

You think he killed anybody in Korea?

WESLEY

They don't hand those medals out for hidin in your foxhole. Would you buy this?

SAM

No-

WESLEY

Me neither.

He searches for something among the curios-

WESLEY

If he hadn't found that Deputy job, I believe Buddy might've gone down the other path, got into some serious trouble. Settled him right down. That and your mother. Course he had that other one later.

SAM

Another woman?

WESLEY

Your mother wasn't one to get chased off her patch. Half the damn county knew and nobody thought the worse of her for seein it through.

SAM

You know who it was?

WESLEY

The other one? Hell, at my age, every time you learn a new name you got to forget an old one. Your head's all crowded up- here it is-

Wesley stretches out a four foot rattlesnake skin, rattles still attached-

WESLEY

This big fella was sleepin in a crate at Cisco's junkyard right when I looked to see what was in it. Jumped up at my face- scared me so bad I killed him without thinkin.

He shakes the rattles at Sam-

WESLEY

Gotta be careful where you're pokin- who knows what you'll find.

54 INT. H. S. OFFICE - DAY

Pilar crosses past the principal's secretary, MARISOL-

MARISOL

Steve called for you.

PILAR

Steve?

MARISOL

Steve. Board of Education Steve who likes you?
He goes for us hot-blooded Mexican girls, I can tell.

PILAR
Spanish, please. My mother would
have a heart attack.

MARISOL
Your mother's family is Spanish?

PILAR
Sure, they go back to Cortez. When
he rode by they were squatting in a
hut cooking hamsters for dinner.

MARISOL
You got to be interested in somebody,
Pilar. All you do is work.

PILAR
All my mother does is work. That's
how you get to be Spanish.

MARISOL
How bout the Sheriff?

PILAR
The Sheriff.

MARISOL
The old-high-school-hearthrob
Sheriff. I thought you were crazy
about each other? He's available,
you're available--

PILAR
I'm unmarried. I'm not available.

MARISOL
You told me one time it was true love.

Pilar takes the pile of mimeos and mail from her slot and
turns to go-

PILAR (mutters)
Nobody stays in love for twenty three
years.

55 EXT. DRIVE-IN MOVIE - (1957) - NIGHT

It is 1972. An early '70's cheezy action picture (Filipino
women-in-chains or biker flick) is playing. We TILT DOWN to
a man's BOOTS crunching across the gravel of the parking
area. Now and then the man turns a FLASHLIGHT BEAM on a
license plate. The cars are all pre-'72, lots of pick-ups,
and the patrons are almost all TEENAGERS. Some have turned
their pickups around to sit on the tailgate and watch, while
others have set lawn furniture out to sit on. We TILT UP
slightly to see the glint of a Rio County Sheriff's badge
pinned on the man's shirt. He trains the FLASHLIGHT on the
license of the car ahead.

We TILT and RACK to see that nobody is visible through the window-

BUDDY (O.S.)

Let's go.

We FOLLOW Buddy up to the driver side of the car as the Deputy goes to the passenger side. We PAN with Buddy's hand down to the door handle- he grabs it, flings it open- the overhead LIGHT flicks ON and there lie YOUNG SAM and PILAR, teenagers, half their clothes off and just about to close the deal. PILAR SCREAMS and the Deputy throws the door open by their heads-

BUDDY

: : : Goddammit!

Buddy grabs Sam's ankles and yanks him out of the car onto the ground as the Deputy awkwardly pulls Pilar out the other side-

YOUNG SAM

What the hell are you doing? You asshole!

BUDDY

How old is that girl? Goddammit, where's your goddam sense?

YOUNG PILAR (O.S.)

Let me go! Pendejo!

YOUNG HOLLIS (O.S.)

Come on now, Missy, get your clothes in order-

Sam is trying to kick and punch at his father, pausing in between to pull his pants up. People are BOOING and HONKING their HORNS all around-

YOUNG SAM

You got no fuckin right! You stay out of my life!

BUDDY

Gimme the keys- gimme the goddam car keys, son-

YOUNG HOLLIS (O.S.)

What am I sposed to do with her, Buddy?

BUDDY

You drive her home and tell her mother where we found her-

YOUNG PILAR (O.S.)

Sam!

The kids are dragged forward into the HEADLIGHTS that are being turned on to see what the ruckus is. Both are crying, struggling-

YOUNG SAM
You leave her alone!

BUDDY
You just shut that mouth, son. I'll deal with you when we get home-

YOUNG PILAR
Please, don't tell my mother! She's gonna kill me!

They step closer into the glaring HEADLIGHTS which WHITE OUT the scene, then FADE.

56 EXT. RUINED DRIVE-IN - (1995) - DUSK

It is DUSK, PRESENT DAY. Our eyes readjust to see Sam, standing by his car in the long-abandoned drive-in. The ruined screen rises in the BG-

CU SAM

Remembering. MUSIC BEGINS as he gets back into the car, pulls away-

MARQUEE - DUSK

MUSIC CONTINUES as the car cruises out past the old marquee, a few letters still jumbled on it, several bullet holes around them-

57 EXT. ROAD/INT. SAM'S CAR - DUSK/NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES as Sam drives, thinking-

58 EXT. ROADS - VARIOUS SHOTS - DUSK/NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES as the car crosses the scrubland back toward town. DUSK turns to NIGHT-

59 EXT. PILAR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES as Sam cruises past Pilar's house. The car is not in the driveway. Paloma hangs with a couple FRIENDS out under the porch light, laughing-

60 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES as Sam's car pulls into the High School lot. He looks up toward the school-

61 EXT. H.S. PARKING LOT- PILAR'S WINDOW - NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES. Sam's POV through the lighted classroom window as Pilar prepares something on the blackboard-

63 EXT. H.S. PARKING LOT

Pilar digs in her bag for her car keys as she makes her way across the lot. She sees something, slows, reacting, then brings us to Sam in his car. He has parked head to foot next to hers. They look at each other for a long moment-

PILAR (softly)
Follow me.

64 EXT. CAFE - SAN JACINTO STREET - NIGHT

Nothing stirring. Pilar's car appears, closely followed by Sam's. The cafe has closed for the night-

65 INT. CAFE - NIGHT

Sam and Pilar sit on chairs next to each other, facing the window, talking softly. STREET LIGHT shining through the letters in the front window makes patterns on their faces-

PILAR
We thought we were something, didn't we?

SAM
Yeah.

PILAR
I look at my kids in school- tenth, eleventh graders. That's who we were. Children.

SAM
Yeah.

PILAR
I mean what did we know about anything?

SAM
Nothing.

Pilar looks at him-

PILAR
When Nando died- it was so sudden- I was kind of in shock for awhile. Then I woke up and there was the whole rest of my life and I didn't have any idea what to do with it.

SAM
You know the other day, you asked why I came back?

PILAR
Yeah?

SAM

I came back cause you were here.

Pilar nods. She gets up and we FOLLOW her across the dark room to the jukebox. She looks at the selections-

PILAR

My mother hasn't changed the songs since I was ten.

She puts in a quarter, punches some numbers. A Mexican BALLAD comes on. She crosses back to Sam, holds her hand out. He stands to greet her. They slow-dance in the empty cafe-

66 INT. SAM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

Sam and Pilar finish making love. They lie beside each other, shaking a little-

PILAR

Wow.

SAM

Yeah.

PILAR

How come it feels the same?

SAM

I don't know. It just feels good. Always did.

PILAR

So what are we gonna do about this?

SAM

More, I hope.

Pilar smiles, looks around the room-

PILAR

How long have you lived here?

SAM

Two years

PILAR

There's nothing on the walls. No pictures-

SAM

Don't have kids. Other pictures- I don't know- it's nothing I want to look back on.

PILAR

Like your story is over.

SAM

I've felt that way, yeah.

She puts her head on his chest-

PILAR

It isn't. Not by a long shot.

He holds her and they lie silently for a moment-

SAM

Pilar?

PILAR

Yeah?

SAM

What was your father's name?

PILAR

Eladio. Eladio Cruz.

FADE OUT:

67 EXT. PILAR'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - MORNING

Paloma sits on the top step of the porch, reading teen magazines. Pilar steps out behind her, dressed casually, and squints at the day-

PALOMA

She finally got up.

PILAR

It's Saturday.

PALOMA

You got in late last night.

PILAR

Yeah. I had uhm- school business.

Paloma gives her a look, then holds a fashion page up for her to see-

PALOMA

Can I get this?

PILAR

Nobody really wears that stuff,
Paloma.

PALOMA

I could name five girls at school who
have one just like it-

PALOMA
I could name five girls at school who
have one just like it-

PILAR
Enough with the clothes-

PALOMA
Just cause you went to Catholic
school and wore a uniform.

PILAR
I only went for my last two years.

PALOMA
How come?

PILAR
Oh, my mother wanted to keep me away
from a- away from boys.

Pilar steps out into the sun-

PALOMA
Did it work?

68 INT. CAFE - MORNING

Hollis is sitting alone by the front window, working on some
huevos rancheros. Sam sits down across from him-

SAM
Morning, Hollis.

HOLLIS
Sam! Quite a do the other day. It
meant a lot to folks that you said
something.

SAM
You thought any more about our murder?

HOLLIS
We have a murder?

SAM
Charley Wade.

HOLLIS
I wish I could tell you I remembered
something new, but I can't.

SAM
I got an idea what happened.

HOLLIS
Do you?

SAM

I think somewhere between Roderick Bledsoe's club and his house Wade ran into Buddy Deeds. I think Buddy put a bullet in him, waited for him to die, threw him in the trunk of the Sheriff's car and drove him out by Fort McKenzie. I think he buried him under four feet of sand and never looked back.

Hollis sits back to look Sam in the eye-

HOLLIS

You lived in the man's house what-seventeen, eighteen years? And you didn't get to know him any better than that?

SAM

I got to go see somebody up in San Antonio. Your memory gets any better, I'll be back tonight.

Sam stands and walks away. We HOLD on Hollis, his appetite gone-

69 EXT. MR. O'S - MORNING

Chet steps around to the side entrance-

70 INT. MR. O'S - BACK ROOM - EXHIBIT - DAY - CU STATUE

We start on a statue of a BUFFALO SOLDIER made from spent bullets and shell casings, then PAN to another, then WIDEN to see Chet as he pokes his head in, the BELL of the door ringing. He steps in cautiously, looking around the room. On the walls there are photo-blowups, some artifacts, hand-lettered information on cardboard. Chet stops to look up at a picture of a bare-chested Black man with a couple feathers stuck in his headband-

OTIS (O.S.)

That's John Horse.

Chet turns to see Otis standing back by the door from the bar-

OTIS

Spanish in Florida called him Juan Caballo. John Horse.

CHET (looks at picture)

He a Black man or an Indian?

OTIS (steps in)

Both.

Otis crosses to the poker table, begins to clean up-

OTIS

He was part of the Seminole Nation, got pushed down into the Everglades in pioneer days. African people who run off from the slaveholders hooked up with them, married up, had children. When the Spanish give up Florida, the U.S. Army come down to move all the Indian people off to Oklahoma-

CHET

The Trail of Tears.

OTIS (smiles)

They teaching that now? Good. Only a couple of em held out- this man, John Horse, and his friend Wild Cat, and a fella name of Osceola. Put together a fighting band and held out another ten, fifteen years. Beat Zach Taylor and a thousand troops at Lake Okeechobee.

CHET

So they stayed in Florida?

OTIS (shakes his head)

Got to be awfully lean times down in those swamps. The band went to the Indian Territories in Oklahoma for a while, but the slave-raiders were on em even there, and one night they packed up rode out for Mexico. Crossed at Eagle Pass.

They move on to some photos of very African-looking people dressed in beautiful Seminole clothing-

OTIS

Men worked for General Santa Anna down there. After the Civil War they came north to Texas and put up at Fort Duncan, and the men joined up what was called the Seminole Negro Indian Scouts. Best trackers either side of the border. Chsed after bandits, rustlers, Texas rednecks, Kiowa, Comanche-

CHET

They fought against the Indians?

OTIS

Same as they had in Mexico.

CHET
But they were Indians themselves.

OTIS
They were in the Army. Like your father.

CHET (surprised)
You know who I am?

OTIS
I got a pretty good guess.

CHET
That guy who got shot-

OTIS
You didn't go telling your father you were here?

CHET
Are you kidding? And face a court-martial?

OTIS (smiles)
He's a pretty tough old man, huh?

CHET
No sports if I don't keep a B average, no TV on school nights, no PDA's-

OTIS
PDA?

CHET
Public Display of Affection. Every time he moves up a rank it's like he's got to tighten the screws a little more-

OTIS
Well-

CHET
I mean just cause he didn't have- you know- didn't-

OTIS
Didn't have a father?

CHET (shrugs)
He's still pissed off about it.

OTIS
When you're his age you'll still be pissed off about him.

Chet nods, looks around-

CHET

So how come you got into all this?

OTIS

These are our people. There were Paynes in Florida, Oklahoma, Piedras Negras- couple of em won the Medal of Honor-

CHET

So I'm part Indian?

OTIS

By blood you are. But blood only means what you let it.

CHET

My father says the day you're born you start from scratch, no breaks and no excuses. You've got to pull yourself up on your own.

OTIS (sad)

Well he's living proof of that, son. Living proof.

71 INT. DEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Athena stands at attention as Del sits at his desk, reviewing her record. He lets her stand for long time before speaking-

DEL

Private Johnson, are you unhappy in the Army?

ATHENA

No sir.

DEL

Then how would you explain the fact that out of one hundred:twenty people we tested, you're the only one who came up positive for drugs?

ATHENA

I'm sorry, sir.

DEL

When you were given the opportunity to enlist, a kind of contract was agreed upon. I think the Army has honored its part of that agreement-

ATHENA

Yes sir-

DEL

Do you believe in what we're doing here, Private Johnson?

ATHENA

I- I can do the job, sir.

DEL

You don't sound too enthusiastic.

ATHENA

I am, sir.

DEL

What exactly do you think your job is, Private?

ATHENA

Follow orders. Do whatever they say.

DEL

Who's 'they'?

ATHENA

The- the officers.

DEL

And that's the job? Nothing about serving your country-

Athena is confused, hesitates to speak-

DEL

These aren't trick questions, Private. You'll be offered an Article 15 and we'll go through the process one way or the other. I'm just trying to understand how somebody like you thinks.

*
*
*

Silence-

DEL

Well?

ATHENA (hesitant)

You really want to know, sir?

DEL

Please.

ATHENA

It's their country. This is one of the best deals they offer.

Del knows he asked for it, but doesn't like the answer-

DEL

How do you think I got to be a Colonel?

ATHENA

Work hard, be good at your job. Sir.
Do whatever they tell you.

DEL

Do whatever they tell you-

ATHENA

I mean follow orders, sir.

DEL

With your attitude, Private, I'm
surprised you want to stay in the
service.

ATHENA

I do, sir.

DEL

Because it's a job?

ATHENA (struggling)

Outside it's- it's such a mess- it's-

DEL

Chaos.

Athena is sure she's over-stepped her rank. Tears begin to
fall-

DEL

Why do you think they let us in on
the 'deal'?

ATHENA

They got people to fight. Arabs,
yellow people, whatever. Might as
well use us.

DEL

Do you think you've been
discriminated against on this post?

ATHENA

No sir. Not at all.

DEL

Any serious problems with your
sergeant or your fellow soldiers?

ATHENA

No sir. They all been real straight
with me.

Del stands, thinking, trying not to bullshit her-

DEL

It works like this, Private- every soldier in a war doesn't have to believe in what he's fighting for. Most of them fight just to back up the soldiers in their squad- you try not to get them killed, try not to get them extra duty, try not to embarrass yourself in front of them.

He is right in her face now-

DEL

Why don't you start with that?

ATHENA

Yes sir.

DEL

You're dismissed, Private.

ATHENA

Thank you, sir.

Athena salutes, steps out. Del looks out the window, troubled by the encounter-

72 EXT. BORDER CROSSING

A battered car full of Mexican DAY WORKERS rolls toward the Mexican side checkpoint-

INT. CAR

Enrique sits squeezed between workers in the back. The driver never stops talking as the officer waves them through-

DRIVER (O.S.)

-Julia es demasiado flaca para mi- me gusta más mujeres con algo en frente- o muy altas como Cindy Crofor. Quisiera montar esa yegua- [Julia's too skinny for me- I like women with something up front- or really tall like Cindy Crawford. I'd like to ride that horse-]

73 EXT. SAN ANTONIO - DAY

Sam's personal car cruises through an upper class neighborhood-

INT CAR

Sam talks on a mobile phone as he drives-

SAM

No, you had to tell him, Ben, we've got no right to keep a lid on it---

Sam turns a corner approaching a house infected by modern architecture-

SAM

-- Danny can't tie my father to Charley Wade's body unless he knows a hell of a lot more than either of us do--- Well, without a smoking gun it's gonna seem like a wild guess-- Right--

He pulls into the driveway, stops-

SAM

No, I'm up here on uhm- on family business.

74 INT. BUNNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sam's ex-wife, BUNNY KINCAID, shuffles across her living room in slippers, crossing to turn off a big-screen TV playing football highlights. Bunny wears shorts, a Houston Oilers sweatshirt and a Dallas Cowboys cap. The living room is like a sports museum- signed footballs, team posters, a bookcase filled with tapes of Texas pro and college football games-

BUNNY

The Longhorns gonna kick some serious butt this Saturday, you just watch. We got a kid at tailback from down your way- outa El Indio-

SAM (O.S.)

That's in Maverick County.

She brings us to Sam, sitting uncomfortably beneath a full-sized blow-up of Tony Dorsett hurdling a tackler-

BUNNY

Oh. Right. And you're in- ?

SAM

Rio.

BUNNY

Right. This kid, Hosea Brown? Does the 40 in 3.4, soft hands, lateral movement- the whole package. Only a sophomore-

SAM

You still going to all the home games?

BUNNY

Well, Daddy's got his box at the stadium, of course, and I'll fly to the Cowboy away games when they're in the conference.
(more)

BUNNY

(cont'd)

Then there's the high school on Friday nights- Churchill got a boy 6'6", 310, moves like a cat. High school, we're talkin. Guess how much he can bench press?

SAM

Bunny, you- uhm- you on that same medication?

BUNNY

Do I seem jumpy?

SAM

No, no- you look good. I was just wondering.

BUNNY

Last year was awful rough- Mama passing on and the whole business with O.J.- I mean it's not like it was Don Meredith or Roger Staubuck or one of our own boys, but it really knocked me for a loop-

SAM

You look good-

BUNNY

-and that squeaker the Aggies dropped to Oklahoma- sonofabitch stepped in some lucky shit before he kicked that goal-

SAM

Yeah, well-

BUNNY

-they hadn't pulled me off that woman I would have jerked a knot in her.

SAM

You were in a fight-

BUNNY

Daddy calls it an 'altercation'. How you doing, Sam? You look skinny.

SAM

Same weight I always was.

BUNNY

You look awful good in that uniform, though.

SAM

Best part of the job.

BUNNY

Daddy hired a pinhead to take your job. He says so himself. Says 'Even my son-in-law was better than this pinhead I got now.'

SAM

Bunny, is that stuff I left in the garage still there?

BUNNY

Least he never called me that. With me it was always 'high-strung'. "My Bunny might have done something with her life, she wasn't so high-strung." Or 'tightly-wound', that was another one. You seeing anyone?

SAM

No. You?

BUNNY

Yeah. Sort of. Daddy rounds em up. You aren't talking about money their beady little eyes go dead.

She points up to a wall loaded with African animal heads-

BUNNY

Speaking of dead, Daddy just sent another one over-

SAM

The water buffalo?

BUNNY

Cape buffalo. Water buffalo are in India.

SAM

You'd think he'd want them on his own wall-

BUNNY

Ran out of room.

(darkly)

Ought to give the whole lot of them to charity- serve the old bastard right-

SAM

You haven't- uhm- you haven't had one of your fires, have you? The stuff I left in the garage- some of it was my father's-

BUNNY

You watch the draft this year?
Course you didn't, idiot question.
They try to make it dramatic, like
there's some big surprise who picks
who in the first round? Only they
been working it over with their
experts and their computers for
months. Doctor's reports, highlight
reels, coaches' evaluations,
psychological profiles- hell, I
wouldn't be surprised if they
collected stool samples on these
boys, have em analysed. All this
stuff to pick a football player for
your squad. Compared to that, what
you know about the person you get
married to don't amount to diddly,
does it?

SAM

Suppose not.

BUNNY

You kind of bought yourself a pig in
a poke, didn't you, Sam?
(more)

BUNNY
(cont'd)

All that time we were first seeing each other, you didn't know I was tightly-wound-

SAM
It wasn't just you, Bunny.

BUNNY
No, it wasn't, was it? You didn't exactly throw yourself into it heart and soul, did you?

She looks at him for an uncomfortably long moment-

BUNNY
Your shit's still in the garage if that's what you came for.

Sam nods, stands. Bunny is in tears-

BUNNY
350 pounds.

SAM
What?

BUNNY
This boy from Churchill, plays tackle both ways. Bench presses three hundred fifty pounds. You imagine having that much weight on top of you? Pushing down? Be hard to breathe. Hard to swallow.

SAM
I think they have another fella there to keep it off your chest. A spotter.

BUNNY
"I only got my little girl now," he says, "she's my lifeline". Then he tells me I can't be in the box anymore if I can't control myself. Sonofabitch don't even watch the damn game, just sits there drinking with his bidness friends, look up at the TV now and then. I do better to sit in the cheap seats with some real football people.

SAM (edging out)
You look good, Bunny. It's nice to see you.

BUNNY (smiles)
Thanks. I like it when you say that, Sam.

75 EXT. MEXICAN HOTEL - CIUDAD LEON - DAY

Enrique looks nervously over his shoulder before stepping into a funky apartment building. We TILT up to the second floor balcony, where a LITTLE BOY is watching the street-

76 INT. MEXICAN HOTEL ROOM

There are eight PEOPLE not including the little boy on the balcony. All are securing their possessions- rolling things in blankets, filling shopping bags and grain sacks. Enrique steps in. JAIME and Anselma look up-

ENRIQUE

Todos estamos? [Everybody here?]

Anselma reaches up from the floor to take his hand-

ANSELMA

Van a disparar a nosotros? [Are they going to shoot at us?]

ENRIQUE

Nadie nos verá. Seramos invisibles.
[Nobody's going to see us. We'll be invisible.]

77 INT. BUNNY'S GARAGE - DAY

A mess. We start on a campaign poster with Sam's face on it and the legend- 'ONE GOOD DEEDS DESERVES ANOTHER - VOTE SAM DEEDS FOR COUNTY SHERIFF'. We PAN to see Sam, who has been digging through piles of old junk, set down the box that he was looking for-

CLOSER

Sam pulls out an old holster, a sheaf of real estate and insurance forms, a couple old paperback Zane Grey westerns. He pulls out a cracked leather pouch, turns it over- letters fall out. He examines an envelope- no stamp or postmark- pulls a letter out, reads-

SAM

'Dearest Buddy- '

He puts the letter down for a moment, thinks. He needs to know. He picks the letter up again, reads-

78 INT. OTIS'S HOUSE - EVENING

Carolyn crosses the living room to answer the RING at the front door. Del stands there-

CAROLYN

Hey, it's the General.

DEL

Colonel. Is uhm- is Otis in?

CAROLYN

Come on in-

DEL

If it's too late-

CAROLYN

Come on in.

Del enters the house as if walking into an ambush-

LIVING ROOM

Carolyn sits back in the couch, drink in hand, checking Del out-

CAROLYN

Otis sittin up with some people at the club. I don't think he'll be long.

CU DEL

Uncomfortable, sitting at the edge of an easy chair. He looks at a mounted magazine photo of Otis smiling as he pours hot sauce on a rack of ribs-

CAROLYN

His hot sauce recipe won a contest last year. They sellin it far away as San Antonio. He got a lot of talent, your father.

Del squirms a bit at the word 'father'-

DEL

You've been in this house for a while?

CAROLYN

I been here with him eight years now. He built it when he was with Leora.

DEL

I never met her.

CAROLYN

There was a bunch of em you never met. Me neither.

Del looks around the living room-

CAROLYN

Let me show you around-

79 INT. OTIS HOUSE - DEN - PHOTOGRAPH

A blow-up of a photo of a squad of Buffalo Soldiers is mounted on the wall-

CAROLYN (O.S.)

He got into all this cowboys and Indians stuff a while back. Spend half his time pokin around in the library way up to Austin.

CU DEL

He looks at something below-

DEL'S POV - CLIPPINGS

We PAN slowly over laminated newspaper clippings mounted behind a picture of young Del in a track uniform, holding a vaulting pole. The clippings are about Del making honor rolls, winning a Silver Star in Viet Nam, graduating from Officer Candidate School, being named head of this and that in the Army-

CAROLYN (O.S.)

Kind of like a shrine, isn't it?

DEL, CAROLYN

Carolyn stands behind, watching Del's face as he looks at the stuff-

DEL

Where'd he get all this?

CAROLYN

Your mother got a brother- Alphonse-

DEL

Uncle Al-

CAROLYN

Otis stood on good terms with the man. Whenever you do something makes the news, he sends it on. When they made you General, Otis just about drove away all our customers going on about it.

DEL

I'm a Colonel.

CAROLYN

Yeah, I know. Man made me memorize the whole damn Army chain of command before he'd marry me. So this is a big deal, commander and all?

DEL

It's a small post and they're phasing it out in two years, but I moved up in rank and- well, a command is a command.

CAROLYN

Otis went on like you were that guy
who won the Gulf War. Colin whatsit.

DEL

My mother said he never asked about
me.

CAROLYN

He never asked her.

It's a bit too much for Del-

DEL

Listen, I uh- tell him I came by.
Thanks-

We HOLD on Carolyn as he hurries out. She salutes-

CAROLYN

Catch you later, Colonel.

80 EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

PEOPLE, crouching low, wade cross the river toward us. When he gets close enough to us we recognize Enrique, nervously leading a group of Mexican men, women and children to the U.S. side. They are spaced out in the dark, loosely holding the line Enrique made in one hand and holding their bundles high away from the water with the other. Enrique stops as he hears a WOMAN'S CRY. The line goes slack, then Enrique hurries forward to join Jaime-

ENRIQUE

Quépasó? [What happened?]

JAIME

Anselma cayó en las rocas. Creo que
la pierna ha sido roto- [Anselma
fell on the rocks. I think her leg's
broken.]

Two men struggle back supporting Anselma, trying to hold her leg out straight in front of her. She is in a lot of pain-

JAIME

No podemos alcanzar el camión
llevando a ella. Hay lugar para
esconderla? [We can't reach the
truck if we're carrying her. Is
there somewhere to hide her?]

Enrique thinks, trying not to panic, as the others come up around him-

ENRIQUE

Conozco solamente una persona con
casa- [I only know one person with
a house-]

ANSELMA (in pain)
Está lejos? [Is it far?]

81 EXT. MERCEDES' HOUSE - BACK PATIO - NIGHT

Mercedes sits on her recliner, drink in hand. An old RECORD plays from inside. She is startled by the voice from the dark-

ENRIQUE (O.S.)
Señora Cruz?

MERCEDES (standing)
Quiénes? [Who is it?]

ENRIQUE
Soy yo, Enrique. No tiene miedo-
[It's me, Enrique. Don't be afraid.]

Enrique steps out into the light. His pants are wet and he's scared-

MERCEDES
What are you doing out there? Are you crazy?

ENRIQUE
Ha pasado un accidente muy grave-
[There's been a bad accident-]

MERCEDES
In English, Enrique. We're in the United States-

ENRIQUE
I have some friends who have had a accident-

MERCEDES
You have somebody else out there?

ENRIQUE
We was by the river? And I hear my friend callin for help, and I look and she has falling in the water-

MERCEDES
Don't tell me lies, Enrique. Qué pasó?

ENRIQUE
We was crossin the river-

Jaime appears in the light now, supporting Anselma, who hops awkwardly to move forward-

::

MERCEDES
Enrique! Quiénten son estos? How
could you bring them here?

ENRIQUE
They need help. Jaime, Anselma-
esta es mi patrona-

JAIME
Señora-

MERCEDES
I'll call the border patrol, they'll
get her to the hospital.

ENRIQUE
No! No puede hacer esto- [You can't
do that-]

MERCEDES
You think you're doing these people
a favor? What are they going to do?
Either they get on welfare or they
become criminals-

ENRIQUE
No es la verdad- [That isn't true-]

JAIME
Con permiso, Señora, la muchacha
tiene mucho dolor- [Please, Señora,
the girl is in a lot of pain-]

Mercedes grudgingly indicates the lounge chair-

MERCEDES
Siéntase. [Sit.]

JAIME
Es muy amable. [You're very kind.]

He and Enrique help Anselma into the chair. The girl looks
up at Mercedes, frightened-

ANSELMA
Ayúdanos, Señora, por favor. No
podemos regresar- [Help us, Señora,
please. We can't go back-]

Mercedes looks at Anselma disapprovingly. The girl can't be
more than fourteen-

MERCEDES
This girl is a friend of yours?

ENRIQUE
Es mi novia. [She's my girlfriend.]

MERCEDES

I thought you were married?

ENRIQUE

I am marry to the cousin of a friend-
but only to be able to live here.
This is the mother of my child-

MERCEDES

This girl has a child?

ENRIQUE

We have a daughter.

MERCEDES (scornful)

Típico.

82 EXT. HOLLIS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Sam stands at the front door of a house on the lake, banging on the door-

SAM

Hollis? You in there? Hollis?

83 EXT. RIVER - NIGHT - 1945

Moonlight kicks off the surface of the water. We hear SPLASHING, the frightened VOICE of a young woman-

YOUNG MERCEDES (O.S.)

Dónde está? Estoy perdido-
[Where are you? I'm lost-]

ELADIO (O.S., distant)

Aquí! [Here!]

The girl flounders into the shot, wet and scared. Young Mercedes, a teenager not unlike Anselma, is wading thigh-deep in the Rio, lost, scared-

YOUNG MERCEDES

No puedo ver la orilla! [I can't see
the bank!]

ELADIO (O.S.)

Aquí! Venga por aquí! [Over here!
Come this way!]

Mercedes struggles toward the voice and suddenly a young man becomes visible, standing in the water, holding his hand out for her. Eladio-

YOUNG MERCEDES

Ví a Rosaria arastrado para el
corriente- [I saw Rosaria taken away
by the current-]

ELADIO

No te molestas. Tenemos a ella.
[Don't worry. We've got her.]

He takes her arm, pulls her toward the far shore-

ELADIO

Cómo se llama? [What's your name?]

YOUNG MERCEDES

Mercedes Gonzales Ruiz.

ELADIO (smiles)

Me llamo Eladio Cruz. Bienvenido a
Tejas. [Welcome to Texas.]

DISSOLVE TO:

84 EXT. MERCEDES' HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT - CU MERCEDES

Mercedes lost in thought as she recalls. She steps into the light by the carport. Enrique and Jaime are propping Anselma's leg up on pillows in the back of Mercedes' old station wagon-

MERCEDES

Rapidamente! Everybody in the world
is going to see!

ENRIQUE

Dónde vamos? [Where are we going?]

MERCEDES

A casa de Porfirio Zayas. He used to
be a doctor on the other side.
Gunshot wounds, fixing babies- if you
can pay he can handle it.

ENRIQUE

Señora, anything it costs, I can work-

MERCEDES

Don't worry about it. He owes me
some favors.

Enrique turns to Anselma, still frightened in the rear of the station wagon-

ENRIQUE

Seas tranquila, hija.
(nods to Mercedes)
Estamos en las manos de Señora Cruz.
[Just relax, honey. We're in the
hands of Señora Cruz.]

Mercedes starts the car-

MERCEDES

In English, Enrique. In English-

85 INT. DEL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Del steps in. Chet sits at the table, drawing a cartoon in panels. Del looks over his shoulder for a moment-

CARTOON

A tank rolling over barbed wire, cannon and machine gun blasting away-

DEL (O.S.)
Homework?

DEL AND CHET

CHET
I finished that. I'm just messing around.

DEL
Tanks, huh?

CHET
You got to be in the Army, you might as well have something slick to drive.

DEL
So you're going into the Army?

Chet looks at him, not in a good mood, then goes back to his drawing-

CHET
That's the general plan, isn't it?

Del watches for a long moment, thinking-

DEL (softly)
That's up to you.

Chet looks at his father again. This is news to him-

DEL
The Army isn't for everybody.

Chet can't quite believe he's hearing this. Del crosses to the refrigerator-

DEL
Not that I don't think you'd be good at it, but- you know- I wouldn't be disappointed if you decided to do something else with your life.

CHET
You wouldn't?

Chet nods, begins to play again, considering the possibilities. Del is making an effort and he doesn't have much practice-

DEL
How's your room shaping up?

CHET
Fine. I'm pretty much moved in.

DEL
Good.

An awkward silence-

CHET (tentative)
Are we going to ever see your father?

DEL
My father.

CHET
Yeah. He lives here, right?

DEL
He does.

Del pulls some food out, watching Chet as he draws-

DEL
Maybe we'll clean that thing out back up, have a barbecue next weekend. We could invite him and his wife over.

CHET
Cool.

Chet flips the page of his sketchbook-

CHET
He makes his own sauce.:

86 EXT. MR. O'S PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The neon off, but a couple cars in the lot and a light within. Sam pulls into the lot, steps out, approaches the door-

87 INT. MR. O'S

The door opens. The place is empty now except for Otis, standing behind the bar, deep in conversation with Hollis, sitting on a stool. Both swivel to look around guiltily as they hear Sam step in-

REVERSE:

Sam walks in slowly, crossing the floor to bring us back to the two men-

REVERSE

Sam walks in slowly, crossing the floor to bring us back to the two men-

SAM

Fellas.

HOLLIS

Hey, Sam.

SAM

Open late.

OTIS

I'm not open. We were just talking.

SAM

Hollis probably told you we found Charley Wade.

OTIS

Yeah. How about that? People start digging holes in this county there's no telling what'll come up.

He sits a few stools away from Hollis-

SAM

You two saw it, didn't you? You two saw it when Buddy killed him.

Hollis and Otis look at each other-

SAM

Imonna find out one way or the other.

HOLLIS

Your father had the finest sense of justice of any man I ever met-

SAM

Yeah, and my mother was a saint. For fifteen years the whole damn town knew he had another woman on the side. Stole ten thousand dollars to set her up in business. But hell, what's that? You got a problem? Buddy'll fix it. Facing some time in jail? Buddy'll knock half of it off- if you do what he says, when he says. You got some business that's not exactly legal? Talk to Buddy-

HOLLIS

Buddy Deeds-

SAM

Buddy Deeds was a murderer.

SAM

That night in the cafe- he didn't stay long after you left, did he, Hollis? Maybe he decided he'd gone too far with Wade, maybe he figured he better not wait for the Sheriff to get behind him. So he stepped out to see if he could catch up- and you were here at the club that night, weren't you O?

Otis sighs, begins to speak softly-

OTIS

I was here.

A87 INT. MR. O'S - CU OTIS - (TRANSITION)

He turns to look toward the door as he reminisces, and we PAN away with his gaze-

OTIS

I'd been running a game on the side after hours- craps, draw poker on the weekends. Roderick didn't know about it. More important, Charley Wade didn't know about it, cause I didn't want to cut him in. I was pretty full of myself in those days- hell, I just didn't expect the man so early-

Sheriff Wade and Young Hollis step in the door and we are back in 1957.

BLUES HARMONICA FADES UP, wailing from the jukebox. They stop and look at the place-

THEIR POV - CLUB

MUSIC CONTINUES. The club is empty, dark. A LIGHT shines from the back room-

88 INT. MR. O'S - BACK ROOM (1957)

MUSIC CONTINUES. Smoke fills the air and Young Otis sits back laughing, a large pile of money on the table in front of him. The other four BLACK MEN at the table aren't doing so well. One by one they all look up past the camera to the door-

CU OTIS

MUSIC CONTINUES. Young Otis doesn't see at first, engaged in dealing the cards. Finally he senses the presence, looks up-

WADE AND YOUNG HOLLIS - YOUNG O'S POV

MUSIC CONTINUES. Wade stands over the table in the FG, Young Hollis hanging back in the doorway. Wade is smiling his cold smile, cursing-

CU YOUNG O

MUSIC CONTINUES. Trying to look unimpressed-

ECU WADE'S EYES

Cold and unblinking. MUSIC CONTINUES-

ECU WADE'S MOUTH

Twisted in a snarl as he curses. MUSIC CONTINUES-

MEN, TABLE

MUSIC CONTINUES. We shoot past Wade's body as the other men step away from the table, grab their hats, and hurry out the side door. Young Otis is left sitting at the table. Wade starts walking toward him--

CU YOUNG O

MUSIC CONTINUES. His eyes following as Wade comes to stand over him-

WADE, YOUNG O

MUSIC CONTINUES. Wade grabs the table and violently jerks it over onto Young Otis, cards and money flying-

YOUNG HOLLIS

MUSIC CONTINUES. Watching squeamishly as Wade goes to work on Young Otis, the overhead LIGHT swinging wildly-

89 INT. MR. O'S

MUSIC CONTINUES. Young Otis is hurled out of the back room, face bruised and bleeding. Wade follows, then Young Hollis-

CLOSER

MUSIC CONTINUES. Wade puts his gun next to Young Otis's ear, cursing at him. Young Otis gets to his feet, goes behind the bar-

BAR COUNTER

MUSIC CONTINUES. Young Otis slaps an envelope full of cash onto the counter-

29 cut

WADE

MUSIC CONTINUES. He waves his pistol, indicating something behind Young Otis-

BAR

MUSIC CONTINUES. We shoot past Wade at the counter as Young Otis turns and reaches for a cigar box on the shelf behind-

CIGAR BOX

MUSIC CONTINUES. Lying open, an old pistol inside of it. Young Otis reaches--

CU YOUNG HOLLIS

MUSIC CONTINUES. Frowning as he senses something wrong-

WADE

MUSIC CONTINUES. Wade levels his gun at Young Otis's back, then turns to wink at Hollis like he did before he shot Eladio-

WADE'S HAND

MUSIC CONTINUES. Finger closing around the trigger of the .45-

HOLLIS

MUSIC CONTINUES. Mouth open in horror-

WADE

MUSIC CONTINUES. Eyes burning as he aims-

BUDDY

MUSIC CONTINUES. Stepping in the door, seeing, CALLS OUT-

YOUNG O

MUSIC CONTINUES. Turning to see Buddy-

WADE

BLAM! THWAP! A bullet plows through his neck, knocking him back against the bar. MUSIC CONTINUES. His gun falls from his hand-

YOUNG O

Horried, splattered with the Sheriff's blood. MUSIC CONTINUES-

BAR COUNTER

MUSIC CONTINUES. Twenty dollar bills have spilled out of the envelope and are soaking up blood-

A89 INT. MR. O'S - CU BUDDY - (TRANSITION)

Calm and hard-eyed. MUSIC CONTINUES. As he steps forward we see his pistol is still in its holster. He reaches out and takes the .45 from Young Hollis's shaking hand, looks him in the eye till Hollis looks back, then looks over off to Young Otis-

We PAN with his gaze to a CLOSE UP of Otis, back in the PRESENT.

The MUSIC FADES-

OTIS

Sheriff Charley was the whip hand for old Judge Tibbs, who pretty much owned this county back then. If the truth came out it wasn't going to go easy on Hollis.

(he shrugs)

I don't know why I trusted Buddy with it- don't know why he trusted me. The first time I ever talked with him was right there and then with a dead white man leakin blood on the floor between us.

WIDER

This isn't what Sam was expecting. Hollis watches his face-

HOLLIS

The three of us cleaned up and took him out by the post and put him under. Can't say I was much help.

SAM

And the ten thousand?

HOLLIS

Widow's benefits. He figured it would make the disappearance look better, and that Mexican gal was just scrapin by after Charley killed her man. They didn't get hooked up till later-

OTIS

Time went on, people liked the story that we told better than anything the truth might have been.

Sam swivels around on his seat to look at the spot where Wade fell. He's had a lot of information to deal with today-

HOLLIS
What's the call, Sam?

Sam rolls it over in his mind before answering-

SAM
Don't think the Rangers are likely to
find out any more than they already
have. As for me-
(shrugs)
It's just one of your unsolved
mysteries.

HOLLIS
But when word gets out who that body
was, people are gonna think Buddy
done it.

Sam gets up-

SAM
Buddy's a goddamn legend. He can
handle it.

He heads for the door-

SAM
Night, fellas.

Hollis and Otis watch him go-

FADE OUT:

90 EXT. RUINED DRIVE-IN, WIDE SHOT (1995) - MORNING

We see Sam sitting on the hood of his car parked in the
deserted drive-in lot, staring up at the ruined screen.
Pilar's car rolls in, parks beside him-

CLOSER

Pilar gets out, kisses Sam, sits by him on the hood-

PILAR
When's the picture start?

Sam looks at her for a moment-

SAM
You gonna tell your mother we been
seeing each other?

PILAR
She'll figure it out sooner or later.
I don't have to ask permission
anymore, if that's what you mean.

113A*.

SAM

You have any idea when your father
died? Eladio?

PILAR (shrugs)
Couple months before I was born-

SAM
Try a year and a half.

He hands her an old snapshot. Pilar looks at it-

CU PHOTO

Buddy and Young Mercedes on the lake. Buddy with his shirt off on one end of a sailboat, Mercedes in a bathing suit, both smiling for the camera-

SAM AND PILAR

Pilar hands the photo back to him, tries to be calm-

PILAR
I've never seen my mother in a bathing suit before. Didn't know she she owned one.

SAM
Buddy bought the cafe for her with money he took from the county.

Pilar looks away, struggling not to cry-

PILAR
They can't pull this on me. It isn't fair- I don't believe this-

SAM
He paid the hospital bill when you were born. Your mom always calls you 'our beautiful daughter' in the letters she wrote to him.

PILAR
From the first time I saw you at school- all those years we were married to other people- I always felt like we were connected.

SAM
I remember thinking you were the one part of my life Buddy didn't have a piece of-

A silence, both of them wondering what the next move should be-

PILAR
So that's it? You're not going to want to be with me anymore?

Sam knows what he feels but doesn't have the words-

PILAR

I'm not having any more children.
After Amado I had some complications-
I can't get pregnant again, if that's
what the rule is about-

SAM

If I met you for the first time
today, I'd still want to be with you.

It's what Pilar needed to hear-

PILAR

We start from scratch- ?

SAM

Yeah-

PILAR

Everything that went before, all that
stuff, that history- the hell with
it, right?

Pilar takes Sam's hand, kisses him-

PILAR

Forget the Alamo.

WIDE SHOT, DRIVE-IN

Sam and Pilar sit by each other holding hands, looking at the
empty screen-

MUSIC, ROLL CREDITS